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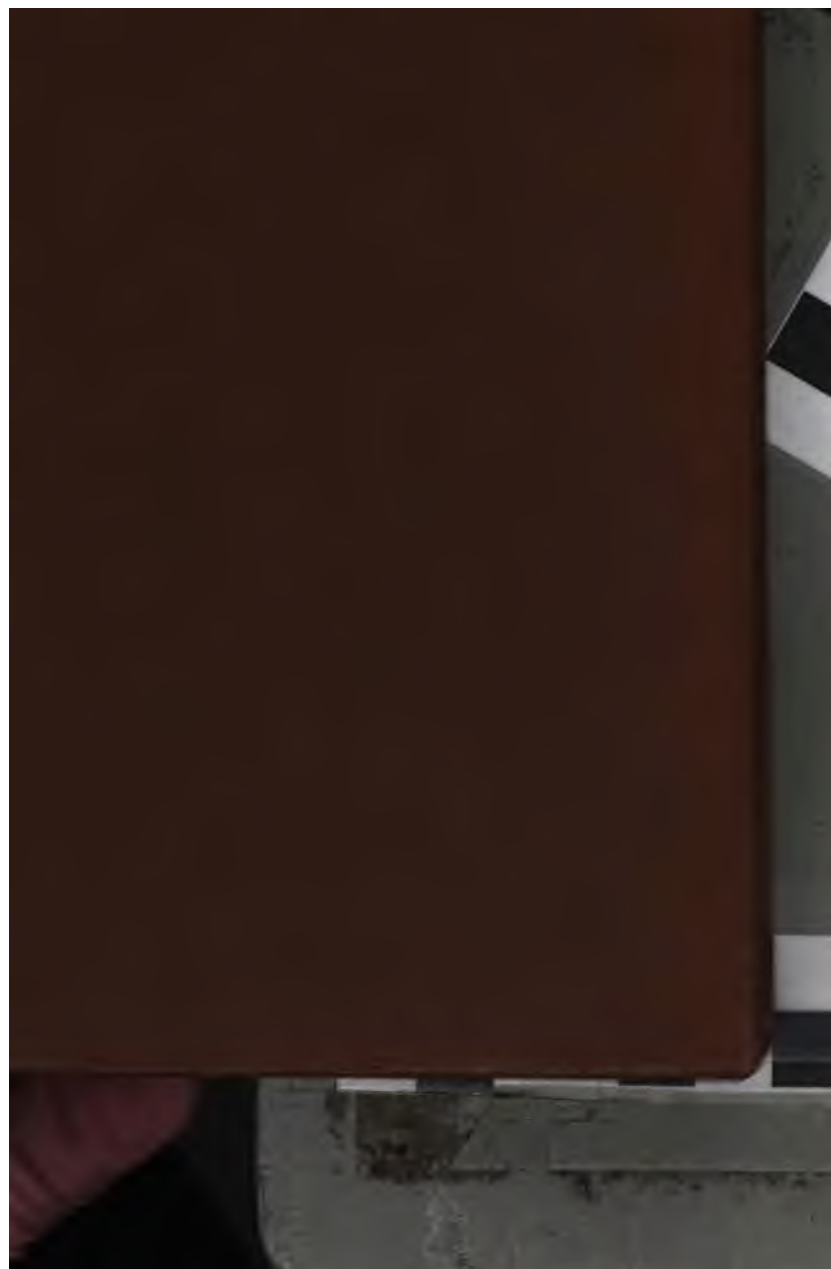
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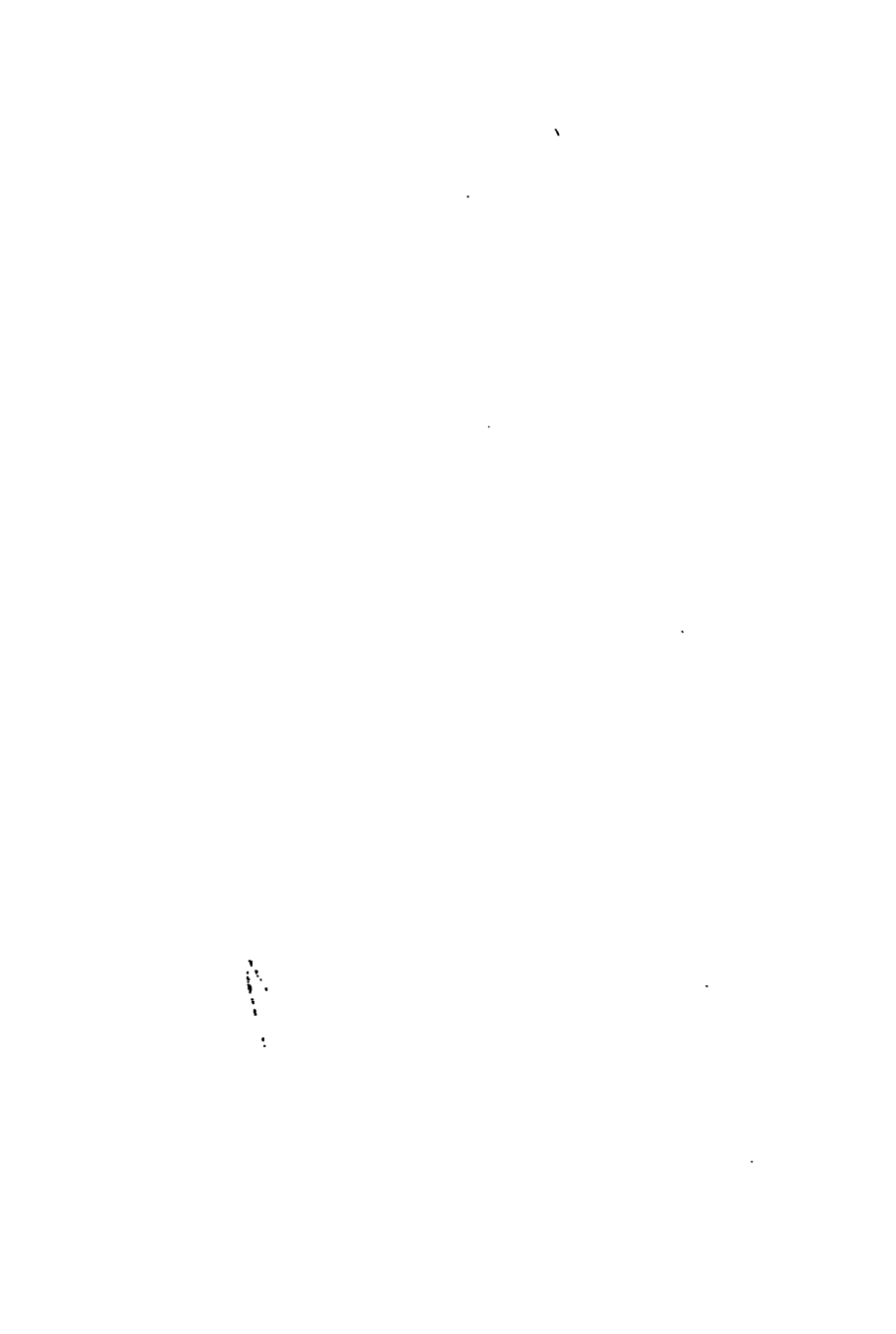
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LETTERS

ON THE

WRITINGS OF THE FATHERS

OF THE FIRST TWO CENTURIES,

WITH

REFLECTIONS ON

THE OXFORD TRACTS,

AND STRICTURES ON

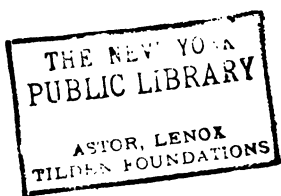
“THE RECORDS OF THE CHURCH.”

Πολλους γαρ επλανησεν η υποληψις αυτων,
“For their assumption has led many astray.”—SON OF SIRACH.
“Their own honor is however secured to the ancients; but *faith is due*
only to God's word, and to experience.”—LORD BACON.

BY MISOPAPISTICUS.

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PREFACE.

Οὐ γὰρ κολακεύοντες ὑμᾶς διὰ τῶν δὲ τῶν γραμμάτων, οὐδὲ πρὸς χάριν ομιλήσαντες, ἀλλ' ἀπαιτησόντες κατὰ τὸν ἀκριβῆ καὶ ἐξεταστικὸν λόγον τὴν κρίσιν ποιήσασθαι, προσεληλυθειμεν, μὴ προλήψῃ, μὴ δ' ἀνθρωπαρεσκείᾳ τῶν δαισιδαίμονων κατεχομένων.—“ For we come not to you, to flatter you by these letters, (writings,) or to address you for favour, but to ask of you to form judgment according to accurate and scrutinizing reason, being not restrained by *prejudice*, nor by a *man-pleasing disposition towards the superstitious*.”—JUSTIN MARTYR, Apol. i. Sect. 2.

THE writer of these Letters has been encouraged to publish them, from having learnt, that when they appeared in “THE RECORD,” they were much approved by many of his brethren, the Clergy. They are now considerably enlarged; and there are added to them Strictures on “the Records of the Church,”—a Letter on Tradition,—and an Appendix, containing copious Notes. The additional Letter was written some time ago, and appeared in the first two Numbers of the Christian Observer for this year. Its object is to shew that Tradition is not acknowledged as any authority in our Church.

The acquired, and not the real Title of the Tracts reflected upon, is here for the most part retained, as they are better known by *that*, than by their own title, "Tracts for the Times."

There is a sort of spell connected with antiquity, which has ever been very injurious to the interest and progress of truth. As it was in Philosophy before the time of *Bacon*, so it has been, and is still in a measure, with respect to religion. The voice of antiquity is by too many deemed oracular; whereas nothing should be so regarded in religion, but the inspired word of truth. The sentiments of uninspired men, however excellent they may have been, are no more divine than in the degree in which they correspond with the Divine word; and so far and no farther are we bound to adopt and follow them.

Through undue and extreme respect for the opinions and practices of the early Fathers and of the primitive Church, religion in after times has been greatly impeded in its progress, being much encumbered by mere human appendages, which not only facilitated the introduction and perpetuity of errors and corruption, but rendered it also less capable of accommodating itself to the innovations of time, and to the varied conditions of society. What is divine is fixed, and cannot be changed. What is human is mutable, and may and ought to be changed, when circumstances require. But to render what is human stable and fixed, is not only a profane attempt to equalize it to what is divine, but proves also highly prejudicial to the

progress of truth. As the Gospel is intended for *all* mankind, there is nothing in its original institution that tends to clog its march, or to prevent the freest communication of its blessings.

The modern experiment, tried by the writers of the Oxford Tracts, to revive the sentiments and customs of the primitive Church, is justifiable *only* on the ground of their being of a divine original. On every other ground, the attempt is extremely absurd, and is calculated to do nothing but evil. It is to give that importance to what is human which is due only to what is divine, to transfer the peculiarities of a rude and superstitious age to another that is highly improved, and to introduce things in themselves for the most part immaterial, that are sure to create disputes and discord. The main design of these Letters is to enable those, not much acquainted with the writings of the primitive Church, to form a correct estimate of its orthodoxy, and to know what importance is justly due to its customs and practices.

“ They that reverence too much *old* times,
Are but a scorn to the *new*.”—LORD BACON.

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LETTERS.

I.

INTRODUCTORY—APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION.

SIR,

I am extremely thankful to you, for the able, bold, and uncompromising manner, in which you have offered your remarks on the *British Magazine* and the *Tracts for the Times*;—the two wooden props of superstition and Popery in our Protestant Church. They have both not only adopted some of the doctrines of the Romish Church; but they do also imitate the tone, spirit, and what I may call the *slang* of Popery: so that one thinks while reading them, that he is reading the writings of some monk or Jesuit, the tenor and substance being so very like. There is a high-toned pretension, combined with a vast show of humility—an apparent candour, united with a narrow-minded exclusiveness—a puling display of zeal, accompanied by a supercilious apathy towards all the grand essentials of truth—and a sanctimonious gravity, evidently produced by superstition, rather than by any

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vital principle of genuine godliness. That this is the character of these publications, no one who possesses any really spiritual discernment, can deny. There is much in them to allure the unwary, and those naturally disposed to superstition, and to impose on the young and inexperienced. There is in them a sort of religious tone, which is very captivating to those who are more led by their feelings than by their understanding. This, combined with great display of zeal, is calculated to be very winning. Whatever the subject be, zeal has always a very attractive power, and has often proved the means either of doing great good, or of producing great evils.

There is scarcely any thing which has been so effective as Zeal, having often produced amazing results. It is a mighty instrument, a machine of vast power; but whether its working be for good or evil, will depend wholly on what sets it in motion. If true religion be the moving power, its working will be beneficial; promotive of honour to God, and of good to man. But if superstition, ambition, selfishness, bigotry, or interest, sets it in motion, dishonour to God, degradation to religion, and untold injury to the well-being of man, will be the inevitable consequences. When we see it displayed, we should always try to ascertain its character. The Jews were zealous; but it was for traditions. The papists are very zealous; but it is for foolish rites, traditionary doctrines, and useless ceremonies. The professors of heathenism are often extremely zealous; but it is for things truly degrading to human nature. The writers in these publications are also very zealous; but for what? For the spiritual truths of the Gospel—for the grand essentials of religion? By no means. They speak,

indeed, of some of these ; but evidently their zeal is for other things, for outward rites and ceremonies ; for false doctrines, such as Baptismal Regeneration, and Popish notions about the Lord's Supper ; for foolish old customs of a barbarous age ; for Tradition and Apostolical Succession. Such seem to be the things which mainly put their zeal in motion, and continue to propel its movements. And woe be to us, if we are captivated by its attractions. How necessary it is in the present day to say to all religious people, " Beware of false prophets !"

Vide
Appendix,
A.

What you said lately on *Apostolical Succession*, was much to the purpose. To infer the character of the Christian ministry from an *abrogated* priesthood, as the writer in the *British Magazine* does, is surely an absurdity which might have well been left to the mother of absurdities, the Church of Rome. Apostolical succession ought to have been *proved* by the writer, instead of being assumed. The subject has more difficulties than those who thus deal with it seem to know. It has no *direct* proof from the Scriptures. If they plead that it has, let them produce it. The text in 2 Tim. ii. 2, is sometimes quoted for this purpose : " The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." But this does not refer to " orders," but to doctrines. He was to convey to them the same truths which he had received from Paul, that they also might convey them to others. This is a transmission of doctrines, and not a conferring of orders. The fact is, and let them disprove it if they can, that there is *no command*, no rule, no regulation in the New Testament, on the subject of apostolical succession, in the sense intended by them. And why so ?

The answer is, because the God of wisdom did not think it right or needful to appoint any thing specifically on the subject; and his wisdom has been abundantly proved by the event. As it is, where there is no command, no rule on the subject, the assumptions of men have produced mischiefs that are incalculable. They have prided themselves on their supposed exclusive privilege, hedged themselves in by an enclosure alleged to be Divine, and anathematized all others. God has never raised such an enclosure. We have, indeed, the *example* of the apostles appointing ministers, and appointing others, such as Timothy and Titus, to ordain ministers, without any command to perpetuate that example. That mode was suitable to the state of things at that time; and it may be suitable still for order and regularity. Bishop *Stillingfleet*, in his *Irenicum*, strongly maintains, that neither our Saviour nor his apostles have appointed or settled any particular mode in this respect. I shall make a few quotations from him:

Stilling-
fleet.

Irenic.
p. 14.

Ibid.
p. 23.

Ibid.
p. 24.

Ibid.
p. 177.

“ Nothing is founded on divine right, nor can bind Christians directly or consequently as a Divine law, but what may be certainly known to have come from God, with an intention to oblige believers to the world’s end.” “ Example doth not bind us as an example. There can be no duty without a law making it to be a duty; and, consequently, it is the law, making it to be a duty to follow such examples, which gives a Divine right to those examples, and not barely the examples themselves.” “ Those who plead the obligatory nature of Scripture examples, must either produce the *moral nature* of those examples; or else a *rule*, binding us to follow those examples.”

“ That Christ hath appointed officers in his Church, and

invested them with authority to preach, and baptize, and administer the Gospel ordinances, is clearly made known to us in the word of God. But whether any shall succeed the apostles in superiority of power over presbyters, or all remain governing the Church in an equality of power, is *nowhere* determined by the will of Christ in Scripture, which contains his royal law." "The main duties and ordinances are prescribed, but their circumstances and manner of performance are left as matters of Christian liberty, and only couched under some general rules: which is a great difference between the legal and Gospel state. Under the law, all ceremonies and circumstances are exactly prescribed; but in the Gospel we read of some general rules of direction for Christians' carriage in all circumstantial things." "Any particular form of government is neither expressed in any direct terms by Christ, nor can be deduced by just consequence; therefore no such form of government is instituted by Christ. If there be any such law, it must be produced, whereby it is determined in Scripture, either that there must be superiority or equality among church officers, as such, after the apostles' decease."

Ibid.
p. 178.

Ibid.
p. 182.

"The essentials of Church government are such as are necessary to the preservation of such a society. Now, all these things have been proved to be contained in Scripture: but whatsoever is not so necessary in itself, can only become necessary by virtue of God's express command; and what is not so commanded is accidental and circumstantial, and a matter of Christian liberty: and such we assert the form of Church government to be."

Ibid.
p. 199.

The learned Bishop also adduces on the subject, "the confession of two canonists, who," he says, "are the

Ibid.
p. 273.

highest among the Papists," and who must of course be very high in the estimation of the writers in the *British Magazine*, and of the Oxford Tracts. These canonists are *Gratian* and *Johannes Seneca*. The passages he quotes are the following :—

Gratian. " 'Sacros ordines dicimus Deaconatum et Presbyteratum; hos quidem *solos* in Ecclesia primitiva habuisse dicitur.

—*Gratian*. We call deaconship and eldership holy orders; it is indeed said, that these *alone* existed in the primitive Church.'"—" 'Dicunt quidem quod in Ecclesia prima

primitiva commune erat officia episcoporum et sacerdotum, et nomina erant communia. Sed in secunda primitiva cœperunt distingui, et nomina et officia.—*Joh. Seneca*. We say, indeed, that in the first primitive Church the office of bishops and priests was common, and that the names were common. But in the second primitive (Church) both the names and the offices began to be distinguished.'"

Irenic. p. 294. "Estius," says the Bishop, "a no mean school-man, fairly quits the Scriptures, and betakes himself to other weapons: 'Quod autem jure divino sint Episcopi presbyteris superiores, etsi non ita clarum est e sacris literis;

Estius. aliunde tamen satis efficaciter probari potest.—That bishops are by Divine right superior to Presbyters, though it be not so clear from the Holy Scriptures, can yet be sufficiently proved from other quarters.'"

Upon this the Bishop shrewdly remarks, "The difficulty is, how a *jus divinum* (a Divine right) should be proved, when men leave the Scriptures."

Irenic. p. 287. "All that I have to say," observes the Bishop in another place, "concerning the course taken by the apostles, lies in these three propositions: That neither can we have

that certainty of apostolical practice, which is necessary to constitute a Divine right : nor, secondly, is it probable that the apostles did tie themselves up to any one fixed course in modelling Churches : *nor*, thirdly, if they did, doth it necessarily follow that we must observe the same."

The learned Bishop brings forward the testimonies of several reformers, English and foreign ; but the most interesting to us is the opinion of Archbishop CRANMER, which he gives as follows :

" ' The bishops and priests were (the same) at one time, Cranmer. and were not two things, but both one office in the beginning of Christ's religion. A bishop may make a priest by the Scriptures ; and so may princes and governors also, and that by the authority of God committed unto them ; and the people also by their election. And the people, before Christian princes were, commonly did elect their bishops and priests. In the New Testament, he that is appointed to be a bishop or priest, needeth no consecration by the Scripture ; for election or appointing thereto is sufficient.' "

" Thus we see," adds Stillingfleet, after giving a more lengthened extract, " by the testimony chiefly of him who was instrumental in our Reformation, that he owned not Episcopacy as a distinct order from Presbytery, of Divine right, but only as a prudent constitution of the civil magistrate for better governing in the Church." In the same page he says : " After our Reformation had truly undergone the fiery trial in Queen Mary's days, in the Articles of Religion agreed upon, our English form of Church government was only determined to be *agreeable* to God's holy word ; which had been a very low and

Irenic.
p. 393.

diminishing expression, had they looked on it as absolutely prescribed and determined in Scripture, as the only form to be observed in the Church."

Irenic.
p. 295.

I shall make a few extracts more from Bishop Stillingfleet's *Irenicum*:—"I handle now only the *testimony* of antiquity; and herein I shall endeavour to show the incompetency of this testimony, as to the shewing what certain form of Church government was practised by the Apostles: for that I shall make one of that fourfold argument, from the *defectiveness* of this testimony, from the *antiquity* of it, from the *partiality* of it, and from the *repugnancy* of it to itself." Then as to defectiveness, he notices it as to places, times and persons; and makes this observation:—"If but one place varied, it were enough to overthrow the necessity of any one form of government, because hereby it would be evident, that they observed no certain or constant course, nor did they look upon themselves as obliged so to do. We have already made it appear that there is no law of Christ absolutely commanding one form and forbidding all other." The Bishop goes through all the above particulars, and shews clearly that there is a great uncertainty on the subject from the testimony of antiquity. And quoting a sentence from Eusebius, in which he acknowledges it hard to find out who succeeded the Apostles in the churches planted by them, except those mentioned in St. Paul's writings, he proceeds thus:—"Is it come to pass at last that we have nothing certain but what we have in Scriptures? and must the tradition of the Church be our rule to interpret Scripture by? An excellent way to find out the truth doubtless, to bend the rule to the crooked stick, to make the judge stand to the

opinion of his lacquey, what sentence he shall pass upon the cause in question; to make Scripture stand up in hand to tradition, to know whether it may have leave to speak or not! Are all the great outcries of Apostolical Tradition, of *personal succession*, of unquestionable records, resolved at last into the Scripture itself, by him from whom all these long pedigrees are fetched? Then let succession know its place, and learn to vail bonnet to the Scriptures. And withal let men take heed of over-reaching themselves, when they would bring down so large a catalogue of single bishops, from the first and purest time of the Church; for it will be hard for others to believe them, when *Eusebius* professeth it is so hard to find them."

The testimony of the celebrated *Hooker* is not very different from that of the Archbishop, and I shall add it here:—

"Another kind of extraordinary vocation is, where the exigence of necessity doth constrain to leave the usual ways of the Church, which otherwise we would willingly keep,—where the Church must needs have some ordained, and neither hath nor can have possibly a bishop to ordain. In case of such necessity, the ordinary institution of God hath given oftentimes, and may give, place. And therefore *we are not, simply without exception, to urge a lineal descent of power from the apostles by continual succession of bishops in every effectual ordination.*"—

Hooker
Ecc. Pol.
book viii.
ch. 14.

I am also tempted to give an extract from the writings of another great and good man, Archbishop *Wake*. The following is taken from the *Christian Observer* for 1820, pp. 379, 381.

"Far from me," says the benevolent and liberally-minded *Wake*. Archbishop, "be the *iron* heart, that for such a defect

(Episcopacy) I should think any one of them (the reformed Churches) to be cut off from our communion, or with certain *raving* writers among us, think them to possess no valid Sacraments, and so to pronounce them scarcely Christian. Who am I, that I should dare to pronounce a sentence of reprobation against any one in whom there appear all the other characters of an humble, upright, sincere Christian, only because he has not perhaps met with the same instruction, or does not argue in the same way; or, in a word, because he is not so wise, or it may be, is wiser than I am, and sees further than I do; and therefore is not exactly of my opinion in every thing?"

Vide
Appendix,
B.

These are great names, and they bear directly against the extravagant sentiments of the *British Magazine* and the *Oxford Tracts*. And they have been adduced here not merely because they are great names, but because they seem to have Scripture, reason, and common sense on their side. What would Archbishop *Wake*, were he now living, think of the authors of these publications? Of course the same as he thought of men of similar sentiments in his day; men of "iron hearts," and "raving writers." For they clearly have such "iron hearts," however smooth their tongues may be, as that they can unchurch "humble, upright, and sincere Christians." And their ravings on High-Church, or rather Romish principles, are quite equal to those of any of the Romanists themselves, with whom they seem anxious to fraternise, while they deny that any except Episcopalians possess "any valid Sacraments," and declare, that "orders" are the only "external mark of a Christian minister."

They have indeed very soft and tender hearts towards

ceremonies and traditions, and even towards the silly practices and gross errors of the Romish Church; but they have no such hearts towards Protestants that are not Episcopal, however excellent they may be, and correct in the essentials of religion. It is not with faith, and love, and heavenly-mindedness, that they feel any sympathy, but with sacramental rites, outward forms and matters of discipline: these they seem to venerate with the same ardent and extravagant devotion as the superstitious heathens their wooden idols, and to regard with as much fondness as infants their pretty dolls. It is amazing with what superstitious feelings some people regard rites and outward forms, ascribing to them such virtues as are wholly unwarranted, and paying them a sort of idolatrous adoration similar to what the Israelites formerly did to the brazen serpent.

Two things seem to me to combine to form such characters—ambition and a superstitious spirit. Learning has been ascribed to these men, and piety too; and hence some conclude, as the Bishop of Lincoln in his late charge, that what they advance is entitled to much attention. But learning is no guarantee for truth; for the most learned have often been the most erroneous; and they have mostly been the authors of heresies in all ages. *Tertullian*, for instance, was certainly one of the most learned of the primitive fathers, and possessed a genius evidently superior to them all; and yet he became a prey to strange chimeras. Piety, when genuine, is a far better guarantee; but a spurious piety, the offspring of superstition, is of all things the most prolific of errors and folly. The piety of forms and ceremonial rites, of fasting and sacramental ordinances, was the parent of most of the extravagancies and fooleries

Vide
 Appendix,
 C.

of Popery. Ambition is rather increased than lessened by learning. Knowledge puffeth up. And ambitious men, in order to raise themselves, if possible, above others, will often do strange things; and the more learned they are, the more dangerous their schemes and their influence. If, in solid attainments and real excellences, they cannot attain superiority, they will have often recourse to some peculiar and unimportant privileges, or to something out of the common way, such as the customs and practices of antiquity, whether wise or foolish, useful or useless, suitable or unsuitable to present circumstances. When men fail to excel others in any of the *great* and *important* qualifications for the ministry, they pique themselves on their ordination, and claim to themselves the exclusive right of preaching and of ministering the sacraments: and to swell the measure of this kind of superiority, they attach, especially to the sacraments, an importance which nothing but Romish traditions can justify. Standing on this pinnacle, raised for them by the Romish Church, they seem as self-complacent as if they had fully gained their ambitious object, while they become in reality objects of compassion or dread to all enlightened Protestants—of compassion, as it respects themselves—of dread, in relation to the effect of their labours on the unstable and ill-informed.

But, as a cloak for this ambition, superstition comes in, which has never failed to win adherents by being extremely devotional. The men of “mint, and anise, and cummin,” have ever been notorious for fasting, making long prayers, and talking and writing most religiously, or rather superstitiously, especially about the traditions of the elders, outward rites, forms, and ceremonies. A truly religious devotion is

the progeny of faith, love, and hope : that which is superstitious is the offspring of puerile and overweening reverence for mere outward ordinances, old customs, and traditionary rites. The latter is often more apparent, showing itself at the corners of the streets, or by crossings, and genuflexions, and is always obtrusive and plausible, as what is shallow and fictitious makes invariably greater noise, show, and display, than what is real and genuine.

Vide
Appendix,
D.

But to return to *apostolical succession*. We have seen that even *Hooker* gives up the point, as being not indispensably necessary for a Christian ministry : and Archbishop *Cranmer* breaks the chain completely, and makes very little account of it. And the truth is, that orders are made very little of in the New Testament, and the main stress is laid on the necessary qualifications for the ministry. We find men preaching, and baptizing too, without orders, as the first deacons, whose appointment, by laying on of the hands of the Apostles, was not to preach or baptize, but to minister the alms of the Church. And what are we to think of Paul, who was never ordained by men ? or if what is recorded in Acts xiii. was an ordination, it was not by apostolical succession, for there was no Apostle present, but “ certain prophets and teachers.” It is true, that he was called and appointed, in an extraordinary manner, by our Saviour ; but still, if apostolical succession was of such importance, why was he not ordained by the first Apostles ? And when he came to Jerusalem, as recorded in Gal. ii., how was he acknowledged as an Apostle ? Did they examine into his ordination ? Had they done so, they would have had no testimony as to his appointment from heaven, but his own ; for the men who were with him, though they

heard the voice, did not, as it appears, understand what was said; and no man's testimony, in his own case, can be received. What, then, were his credentials? The *effects of his ministry*, God owning him in his work. This satisfied them, and they acknowledged him as a true minister. And though I wholly subscribe to the high propriety of ordination by men, as an useful practice, and, in ordinary circumstances, a necessary means of that good order in the Church, so strongly enforced in the word of God, yet I am fully persuaded that many not episcopally ordained, and not ordained at all by men, are sent and ordained by a higher power, for God owns and blesses them for the conversion of souls, as he did St. Paul. And all that preach the truth, and can produce credentials of this kind, ought to be owned by all as true Christian ministers. To do otherwise, would be to act directly contrary to the practice of our Lord's own Apostles, which is with me a practice of far higher authority than that of succeeding ages. But it may be said, that extraordinary gifts attended St. Paul's ministry. This is very true. But what were they? They were *secondary* things as to time and importance. They were conferred on none but those who were first converted, or professed to be so; and they were only given for a time, to answer a temporary purpose, and were in value nothing, when compared with converting grace, which accompanied his ministry.

To say, therefore, that "there is no other external mark of a Christian minister," is to say what the best antiquity does in no degree countenance. It is exactly the same thing, in my view, as to say that a man of straw is a real man, because a coat is put on him; or that a scarecrow is

a real man, because a hat is put on its head. Ordination is well in its place; but make too much of it, make it the only "external mark," and you make it worse than no ordination at all. For my part, I would prefer a simple layman, who "rightly divided the word of truth," who "held faith and a good conscience," who was "apt to teach, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate," and who "ruled well his own house," which are the apostolic outward marks of a Christian minister,—I would far prefer such an one to all those who think that orders is the only external mark. When people adopt and propagate such antiscriptural notions, there is no wonder that others leave the Church, and that some turn Quakers, and allow of no ministry at all. And may we not expect that God, in his providence, will degrade the office and do away with orders altogether? yea, were orders as much his appointment as some would have them to be, when they are thus abused by extravagance? Did not God distinctly appoint the sacrifices under the law? and what did he do with them, when the Jews placed most of their religion in the mere acts of sacrificing? He caused them to be discontinued, by removing the people into a distant country. And what did he say of them, previous to his making them thus void? "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me?—Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination to me." And was not the temple built with the express approbation of God? And what did he do to the temple, when the people thought that to be a sufficient external mark of their being his people? He destroyed it. And when mere "orders" are made of such consequence, what are we to expect? and what, indeed, has actually taken place already in this coun-

try? God has evidently endowed men without "orders," and has extensively blessed their ministry; and "orders," not because they are not right in their place, but because they have been too much considered as the only external mark, have been brought into disrepute; and nothing will bring them again into repute, and nothing ought to bring them into repute, but the exhibition of such external marks accompanying them as the word of God requires.

But when men fail to prove what they wish from the Scriptures, they go to tradition; and thus they imitate the Jews in our Saviour's time. The Fathers are appealed to, as if they were almost infallible. It has ever been the disposition of man to leave God, and to seek out some broken cisterns. This was the case with the Jews: they had the Scriptures, but they paid more regard to the traditions of the elders. This is the case with the Papists: they do, indeed, acknowledge the Scriptures, but they acknowledge tradition as equal to them, and really and practically far above them. The same spirit evidently prevails in the writers of the *British Magazine* and the *Oxford Tracts*. Tradition seems to be the idol. Uninspired writings of poor fallible men, like ourselves, must be brought in to overrule and control the inspired book of God,—to curtail or extend its meaning, as they think proper. Let these be taken as helps and assistants, and there can be no objection; but if they be constituted judges, the inevitable consequences will be, that God's word will be dishonoured, reason and sanctified understanding will be outraged, and the way will be paved for the introduction of the greatest delusions. Some of the Fathers, especially the earliest, were the greatest bunglers

in interpreting Scripture of any that have ever lived ; which I intend shewing in my next letter. It is not well, indeed, to disclose and expose the weaknesses of good, well-meaning men ; but when they are converted into a sort of demi-gods, it is a duty to shew what they were, that men may be shamed, when they cannot be reasoned, out of their folly. Vide
Appendix,
E.

And here, sir, I am very much disposed to give a challenge to these wise men of the *British Magazine* and of the Oxford Tracts ; and I will do so, especially, with the view of undeceiving the public on this point ; and my challenge is this :—

I challenge all these men to produce from the modern works of sectaries any thing so puerile, fanciful, foolish, extravagant, and unscriptural, as I shall produce from the writings of the very earliest Fathers, even those called apostolical.

This is my challenge ; and let them ransack the works of all the sectaries in our day, except Socinians and Papists. I could almost afford them the works of Joanna Southcote and Jacob Behmen. I will not except those of Ranters ; for I am sure I can match them, and even over-match them. With this challenge I close this letter.

MISOPAPISTICUS.

II.

SIR,

Jan. 11, 1838.

Before I proceed to make extracts from the Fathers, it is necessary that I should give some brief historical account of the Scriptures and of the Fathers' writings. According to the most approved opinions, all the books of the New Testament, with the exception of St. John's Gospel and the Revelation, were written before the year 70. The Gospel and the Revelation of St. John are supposed to have been written between 96 and 99. These are all the inspired writings. The next records which we have are those called the writings of the *Apostolical Fathers*, that is, of *Clement*, *Barnabas*, *Hermas*, *Ignatius*, and *Polycarp*. There are two epistles of Clement,—one of Barnabas,—visions, commands, and similitudes by Hermas,—seven epistles of Ignatius,—and one of Polycarp; these, together with the relations of the martyrdoms of Ignatius and Polycarp, contain all we have belonging to those called the Apostolical Fathers, that is, such as lived with and had seen some of the apostles; and “these, together with the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament,” says Archbishop Wake, who has

translated them all into English, "are a *complete collection of the most primitive antiquity for about 150 years after Christ.*"

To make up *two* centuries, we must take in the works of *Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Theophilus*, of Antioch, *Tatian, Irenæus*, and perhaps of *Tertullian*, though he wrote, if not *in* the third, yet on the eve of that century. All other writings during the *first two* centuries are either acknowledged spurious, or deemed doubtful or heretical. The Apostles' Creed, as we have it, is no production of that period, as may be clearly proved. The Canons of the Apostles, as they are called, were not drawn up by any of the Apostles, nor, probably, during the second century, except in a few instances. They were "put together," says Archbishop *Wake*, "at several times, and finished as we now see them, within 300 years after Christ." As a proof they did not exist in the first two centuries, they are not mentioned, as far as I can find out, in any authentic work belonging to that period. The beginning of the third century is the earliest date that can, perhaps, be fixed for any of them. To call them Apostolical is very wrong, as it tends only to impose on those not acquainted with their origin. I shall now proceed to notice the contents of the epistles and other works of those called the Apostolical Fathers.

Vide
Appendix,
F.

Vide
Appendix,
G.

I.—THE TWO EPISTLES OF CLEMENT.

His *first* epistle, written in the name of the Church at *Rome* to the Church at *Corinth*, is supposed to have been

sent between the years 68 and 70, clearly after the death of Paul. It is rather a long epistle, occupying in Archbishop Wake's translation, about forty-six octavo pages in a type of moderate size. Its contents, for the most part, are very excellent; much calculated to cure the evils of schism and sedition, prevalent at the time in the Corinthian Church, on account of which evils it was sent. It contains large and long quotations from the Old Testament, and some from the New. It refers to Scripture only as authority, and never mentions nor alludes to tradition at all. "Look," he says, "into the Holy Scriptures, which are the true words of the Holy Ghost. Ye know that there is nothing unjust or counterfeit (*παρὰπτοῖνμενον*, forged) written in them." Sect. 45. Though there be several minor points on which he seems fanciful, I shall adduce now but one passage, in which a Judaising spirit appears evident. That I may not trouble your readers with the original, and yet afford them satisfaction that the rendering is correct and faithful, I shall give in this and in other instances the translation of Archbishop Wake. The italics are mine: —

First Ep.
of
Clement.
Sect. 40.

"It behoves us to take care that . . . we do all things in order, whatever our Lord has commanded us to do: and particularly that we perform our offerings and service to God at their *appointed seasons*: for these he has commanded to be done, not rashly, (by chance) and disorderly, but at certain *determinate times and hours*. And, therefore, he hath ordained by his supreme will and authority, *both where and by what persons* they are to be performed; that so all things being piously done to all well-pleasing they may be acceptable unto him. They, therefore, who make their offerings at the *appointed seasons*, are happy

and accepted, because that, obeying the commandments of the Lord, they are free from sin. And the same care must be had of the persons that minister unto him. For the chief priest has his proper services, and to the priests their proper place is appointed; and to the Levites appertain their proper ministries; and the layman is confined within the bounds of what is commanded to laymen."

The whole effect of this passage was to Judaize the Christian Church. The command of the Lord as to offerings at appointed seasons, determinate times and hours, could have no reference to any thing in the New Testament, but to the Old. The tenor of the whole passage is ceremonial, legal, and Jewish.

The *second* epistle of Clement is also to the Corinthians. Its genuineness is doubted by many, but conceded by Archbishop *Wake* and some others. Its date cannot well be ascertained. It is short, and seems much inferior, in many points, to the other. The spirit of it is not very Evangelical, but tinged with legality; and its conclusion is worthy only of a Jewish Rabbi:—"For the Lord himself being asked," he says, "by a certain person when his kingdom should come, answered, When two shall be one, and that which is without as that which is within; and the male with the female, neither male nor female."

Where he got this, it is not difficult to guess. That it is wholly unlike anything said by our Saviour, needs no proof. It bears the stamp and mark of a Rabbinical origin; and he no doubt heard it from some Jewish Christian, still deeply tinged with the remains of his former sentiments. The Oxford Tract men may consider this, if they choose, as a precious traditionary relic, handed down to Clement

from the Apostles ; but I feel quite satisfied that he got it in the way I have explained. Of this tradition, Clement himself gives us the explanation, which is quite consistent with the train of the tale itself :—

“ Now *two are one*, when we speak the truth to each other ; and there is (without hypocrisy) one soul in two bodies. *And that which is without as that which is within* ; he means this, he calls the soul that which is within, and the body that which is without. As, therefore, thy body appears, so let thy soul be seen by its good works. *And the male with the female, neither male nor female* : he means this, he calls our anger the male, our concupiscence the female. When, therefore, a man is come to such a pass, that he is subject neither to the one or the other of these, both of which, through the prevalence of custom and an evil education, cloud and darken the reason ; but rather having dispelled the mist arising from them, and being full of shame, shall, by repentance, have united both his soul and spirit in the obedience of reason ; then, as Paul says, there is in us *neither male nor female*.”

II.—THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF BARNABAS.

This was the companion of St. Paul, and is called an apostle ; and hence great weight is allowed by many to what he has written. That he was a good man appears from
 Vide Appendix, H. Scriptures ; but that he was *inspired* to write for the benefit of the Church does not appear ; nor does the character of his epistle justify such a supposition. Many may be good, honest, and pious men, and yet be very wrong and foolish in many of their notions. The *date* of this epistle I cannot

ascertain. It is supposed to have been written more especially to Jewish Christians, and he himself was a Jew. It takes up thirty-six pages in *Wake's* translation.

This epistle, with a few exceptions, is very fanciful and extravagant, the production of a mind by no means free from the influence of Jewish fictions. How the good Archbishop *Wake* came to view it as half-inspired, seems very strange, as there are many things in it which offend even common sense; mixed, indeed, with a few things which are good and excellent. It is a strange mixture of wisdom and folly, of truth and error, of sobriety and extravagance.

How incongruous is the exposition he gives of Moses' breaking the two tables:—

“And Moses cast the two tables out of his hands; and their covenant was broken, that the love of Christ might be sealed in your hearts, unto the hope of his faith.”

How strange an explanation of Scripture is the following:—

“Behold, thus saith the Lord God; enter ye into the good land of which the Lord hath sworn to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, that he would give it you, and possess it; a land flowing with milk and honey. Now, what the spiritual meaning of this is, learn it; it is as if it had been said, Put your trust in Jesus, who shall be manifested to you in the flesh: forasmuch as out of the substance of the earth Adam was formed.—But what signifies the *milk and honey*? Because, as the child is nourished with milk and then with honey, so we, being kept alive by the belief of his promises and his word, shall live and have dominion over the land. For he has foretold, saying, *Increase and*

Abp.
Wake.
Pp. 169,
170.

multiply, and have dominion over the fishes, &c. But who is there that is now able to have this dominion over the wild beasts, or fishes, or fowls of the air? For you know that to rule is to have power, that a man should be set over what he rules. But forasmuch as this we have not now, he tells us when we shall have it, namely, when we shall become perfect, that we may be made inheritors of the covenant of the Lord."

I could easily multiply instances of this kind of strange, fanciful, unmeaning, and incoherent exposition; and were I to give all, it would be to transcribe the greatest part of the epistle. I shall content myself with the following passage, which is purely Cabalistical:—"Understand, therefore, children, these things more fully, that Abraham, who was the first that brought in circumcision, circumcised, having received the *mystery of the three letters*. For the Scripture says, that Abraham circumcised three hundred and eighteen men of his house, ('Many others,' says *Wake*, in the margin, 'of the ancient Fathers have concurred with him in this.' If so, they said what the Scripture does not say.) But what, therefore, was the mystery that was made known unto him? Mark, first the *eighteen* and next the *three hundred*. For the numeral letters of ten and eight, are I H, and these denote *Jesus*. And because the cross is that by which we are to find grace, therefore he adds *three hundred*, the note of which is T (*the figure of the cross*). Wherefore, by two letters he signified *Jesus*, and by the third his cross. He who has put the engrafted gift of his doctrine within us, knows that I never taught to any one a more certain truth; but I trust that ye are worthy of it."

Ibid.
Pp. 175,
176.

This I expect will exactly suit the taste of the admirers of the *British Magazine* and the Oxford Tracts; for the material cross is magnified, and it is a "certain truth" announced by an Apostolical Father. These two considerations must of course strongly recommend to them this Cabalistic fiction. How thankful ought we to be for the inspired writings! The more I read of the Fathers, the more I admire the solidity, sobriety, and wisdom of the Scriptures, and the more convinced I am that they *are* inspired. The difference between them and the writings of those who came nearest to them in time, is amazing—is, in fact, such as to be sufficient of itself to convince us of their inspiration.

III.—THE WRITINGS OF HERMAS.

It is thought probable that he was the *Hermas* mentioned by St. Paul in Rom. xvi. 14, as one belonging to the Church at Rome. He is called the *Pastor* or *Shepherd* Hermas. He seems to have been at Rome when he wrote, and the time appears to have been about the year 70. His works occupy 147 pages in *Wake's Translation*, and are divided into *three* books. The first contains 4 *visions*; the second, 12 *commands*; and the third, 10 *similitudes*. They might indeed have been all called *visions*; for the whole is said to have been communicated to him by some lady, or some angel or another, whom he sees either in dreams, or visions.

In reading *Hermas*, one is greatly at a loss what opinion to form of him. That he was inspired, is a thought that

the mind cannot for a moment entertain; his ideas and notions are often so drivelling, and oftener so strange and unmeaning, that it is not possible for any to harbour that thought, except he were wholly blinded by veneration for the Fathers, as many learned men have been, and are still. The difficulty is, to determine whether he was an allegorizer, like Bunyan, or an enthusiast, like Jacob Behnen. It appears to me, after much consideration, that he was an enthusiast. This is the correctest and the most charitable opinion that can, I think, be formed of him. He sees ladies, old women, as well as angels in his visions, and holds converse with them; and all his writings are made up of these conversations. And this book, as we are told, was read in the Churches in the earliest ages; which certainly is no great credit to the Primitive Church.

In his second vision, the heading of which is, "Of his (Hermas) neglect in correcting his talkative wife," &c. he represents himself as being carried away by "the Spirit" into the place where he had seen a vision the year before, and then proceeds thus:—"When I was come unto the place, I fell down upon my knees, and began to pray unto the Lord and to glorify his name, that he had esteemed me worthy, and had manifested to me my former sins. And when I arose from prayer, behold, I saw over against me the old woman whom I had seen the last year, walking, and reading in a certain book. And she said to me, 'Canst thou tell these things to the elect of God?' I answered and said to her, 'Lady, I cannot retain so many things in my memory, but give me the book and I will write them down.' 'Take it,' says she, 'and see that thou restore it again to me.' As soon as I had received it, I went aside to

a certain place of the field, and transcribed every letter, for I found no syllables. And as soon as I had finished what was written in the book, the book was suddenly caught out of my hands, but by whom, I saw not. After fifteen days, when I had *fasted*, and entreated the Lord with all earnestness, the knowledge of the writing was revealed unto me. Now the writing was this :—‘ Thy seed, O Hermas, hath sinned against the Lord, and have betrayed their parents, through their great wickedness. And they have been called the betrayers of their parents, and have gone on in their treachery. And now have they added lewdness to their other sins and the pollution of naughtiness. Thus have they filled up the measure of their iniquities. But do thou upbraid thy sons with all these words, and thy wife, which shall be thy sister ; and let her learn to refrain her tongue, with which she calumniates. For when she shall hear these things, she will refrain herself, and shall obtain mercy. And they shall also be instructed, when thou shalt reproach them with these words, which the Lord hath commanded to be revealed unto thee. Then shall their sins be forgiven, which they have hitherto committed, and the sins of all the saints which have sinned, even unto this day ; if they shall repent with all their hearts, and remove all doubts out of their hearts. For *the Lord hath sworn by his glory concerning his elect, having determined this very time, that if any even now sin, he shall not be saved. For the repentance of the righteous has its end ; the days of repentance are fulfilled to all the saints ; but to the heathen there is repentance even unto the last day.*’ ”

How unmeaning and how rambling are many parts of this vision ! Transcribing letters and not syllables ! Then,

Abp.
Wake.
Pp. 205,
206.

after *fasting* and praying, there is a discovery of these letters made to him : and the revelation is, among other things, about his talkative wife ! Then she is sure to repent and find mercy after hearing these words ! After this, he rambles into another subject, and speaks of the repentance of all the saints, and states, that there is a determinate time, after which, if they sin, they shall not be saved. The writers of the Oxford Tracts have picked out a leaf here, and from other parts of Hermas's writings ; for they hardly allow repentance after baptism. No more does Hermas, for these are his words : —

“ I have even now heard,” he says to the angel, “ from certain teachers (like the Oxford Tracts men,) that there is no other repentance besides that of baptism, when we go down to the water and receive the forgiveness of our sins ; and that after that we must sin no more, but live in purity. And he (the angel) said unto me, Thou hast been rightly informed.”

The angel, however, qualifies this in some respect, and tells him, that the Lord had appointed repentance under certain circumstances, and “ *gave* ” him “ *the power of it.* ” And therefore, he adds, “ I say unto thee, If any one after that great and holy calling shall be tempted by the devil, and sin, *he has one repentance.* ” I do not know whether the men of Oxford go so far, or farther than this. It was not without reason, as it appears evident from Hermas, that St. John in his First Epistle, has spoken so *pointedly* on the subject of forgiveness. He doubtless observed this error prevailing in his day.

Abp.
Wake.
p. 238.

1 John
i. 8—10;
ii. 1, 2.

There are many seeds and germs of future errors to be found in Hermas, besides such as are evident and glaring.

There are many errors that became prominent in after ages, which may be traced to Hermas ; such as the adoration of angels, baptismal regeneration, the merit of works, and some others.

On the subject of baptism he is as extravagant as any one can well be. He represents himself as seeing a great tower built, which turns out to be the Church. He sees the building going on, and stones brought into it from various places, from twelve adjoining mountains, from the plain, and from the deep, or the water. He asks the angel to reveal the meaning of all this, which he does at length. About the stones of the deep, which were the saints under the Old Testament, the angel speaks thus : —

“ It was necessary for them to ascend by water, that they might be at rest. For they could not otherwise enter into the kingdom of God, but by laying aside the mortality of their former life. They, therefore, being dead, were nevertheless sealed with the seal of the Son of God, and so entered into the kingdom of God. For before a man receives the name of the Son of God, he is ordained into death ; but when he receives that seal, he is freed from death, and assigned into life. Now that *seal is the water of baptism*, into which men go down under the obligation unto death, but come up appointed unto life. Wherefore to these also was this seal preached, and they made use of it, that they might enter into the kingdom of God. And I said, Why then, Sir, did these forty stones also ascend with them out of the deep, having already received that seal ? He answered, Because these apostles and teachers, who preached the name of the Son of God, dying after they had received his faith and power, *preached to them who were*

dead before ; and they gave this seal to them. They went down, therefore, into the water with them, and again came up. But these went down whilst they were alive, and came up again alive ; whereas those, who were before dead, went down dead, but came up alive. Through these, therefore, they received life, and knew the Son of God ; for which cause they came up with them, and were fit to come into the building of the tower ; and were not cut, but put in entire ; because they died in righteousness, and in great purity ; *only this seal was wanting to them.*"

Abp.
Wake.
Pp. 325,
326.

The men of the Oxford Tracts have evidently imbibed a portion of what is said here ; but they do not seem to have made up their system so complete as Hermas did. They had better mend it, otherwise it will not be thoroughly apostolical and primitive. Hermas makes the dead as well as the living to be baptized ; and, giving them the seal of baptism, he transfers them straight into heaven. But there is one good thing in his system ; he gives the sign to none but godly men. To transcribe all the strange things said by this writer, would be to transcribe the whole book ; I shall, therefore, give only one extract more, which clearly teaches the merit of works ; the angel says to him :—

"Keep the commandments of the Lord, and thou shalt be approved, and shalt be written in the number of those that keep his commandments. But if, *besides those things which the Lord hath commanded, thou shalt add some good thing, thou shalt purchase to thyself a greater dignity*, and be in more favour with the Lord than thou shouldst otherwise have been."

p. 276.

The notice of *Ignatius* and *Polycarp*, I shall reserve for another letter, and shall close this with a few brief remarks.

The idea generally entertained of the early Church, even in the time of the apostles, is, I conceive, extremely erroneous. There is an extent of knowledge and a purity of doctrine ascribed to it, which no right view of its circumstances can justify. We too often judge of what it believed by the Gospels and Epistles, taking for granted that they fully comprehended and imbibed all their heavenly and sublime truths. So far were they from having any enlarged knowledge, that it appears, judging by the writings of those uninspired, that their views were very confined. And what are we to think of them by the reproofs in many of the Epistles, but that they were very deficient both in knowledge and moral conduct? And no wonder, considering the great disadvantages under which they laboured. Too much has been also attributed to miraculous gifts; these were often abused, and the possession of them was no guarantee against errors. Nothing but inspiration is infallible.

The most ignorant era of the primitive Church was in my view the first; including the latter part of the *first* and the whole of the *second* century. Hence so many strange heresies sprung up, which began to rise even in the Apostles' time. The light which the Apostles brought was clear and bright, but the dark world received it but very partially. From the death of the apostles until *Justin Martyr*, (about eighty years after the death of Peter and Paul, and about fifty after the death of John,) there was no writer of any note; and the Scriptures were comparatively in but few hands, especially those of the New Testament: and the works of Clement, and Barnabas, and Hermas, were read in many of the Churches: which afterwards were discontinued. And how came they to be discontinued? Doubtless, through the

increasing knowledge the Christians acquired by having the New Testament Scriptures collected together, and more generally dispersed. It was, no doubt, found impracticable to reconcile the Judaizing tendencies of Clement, the Cabalistic fancies of Barnabas, and the wild reveries of Her-
mas, with the Christian, sound, and sober truths of the New Testament.

MISOPAPISTICUS.

III.

SIR,

Jan. 15, 1838.

It is very necessary, in order to form a right judgment of characters, to keep in view the distinction between knowledge and piety, correct views and holy impressions, or a clear head and an upright heart. The one may exist, and does often exist, without the other. We may be quite orthodox in our sentiments, and yet be far from having true religion in our hearts. And the converse of this is also true. The heart may be right, while we may be wrong in many of our opinions. A man may be a true and devoted Christian, though he may entertain views on many points by no means correct. The present day exhibits abundant instances confirmatory of this truth. There are good and pious men to be found among all denominations of Christians who hold the essentials of the Gospel : and yet how various and contradictory are many of their sentiments, on points, too, deemed of considerable importance ! So that a man's having a right heart is no proof that he has a clear head. I make these remarks to prepare the reader for the observations I am going to make on Ignatius and his epistles : —

IV.—THE EPISTLES OF IGNATIUS.

Ignatius. This evidently pious man was Bishop of Antioch from the year 69 to the year 110, or as some say, to the year 116. When *Trajan* the Emperor was on his way to subdue the Parthians, and passing through Antioch, *Ignatius*, as we are told, was “voluntarily brought” before him. The old saint conducted himself very courageously, and seemed to court persecution rather than avoid it. We cannot but admire him, and yet blame him: for as I shall presently shew, there was a considerable sprinkling of superstition in his religion. Though he shewed an apostolic courage, he did not manifest an apostolic spirit. *Trajan*, after examining him, condemned him to be thrown to wild beasts; and he was ordered to be sent to Rome for that purpose. On his journey to Rome he was allowed to stop at several places, especially at *Smyrna*, where *Polycarp* was; and received deputations from several of the Asiatic Churches, to whom, in return for their kind attentions, he wrote epistles: and it was during this journey that he wrote all his epistles. His *seven* epistles were written to the *Ephesians*, *Magnesians*, *Trallians*, *Romans*, *Philadelphians*, *Smyrneans* and to *Polycarp*. They are all short, occupying altogether sixty-five pages in Archbishop *Wake’s* translation. When he arrived at Rome the sentence was executed, and he was devoured by wild beasts, while manifesting great courage, and a desire for martyrdom incapable of being altogether justified.

Epistles.

It would be wholly unjustifiable to expose the weaknesses of this good man, were it not that improper advantage has

been taken of his sentiments, and that he has been brought forward as an authority in support of many things wholly unscriptural. I shall arrange what I shall adduce from his epistles under the heads of *errors*, *fancies*, and *extravagancies*.

I.—ERRORS.

There are many germs of error in his epistles, and some grown into considerable size. I cannot consider the following but in this light:—

Errors.

“Let all reverence the deacons as Jesus Christ, and the bishop as the Father, and the presbyters as the sanhedrim of God and college of the apostles. Without these there is no Church.”

Epist.
to the
Trall.
sect. 3.

This was to claim for poor fallible creatures what did not belong to them: and to assert that there is no Church without them is wholly unscriptural; for we read of Churches in Paul’s epistles in which there *could* not have been all these officers. Then he speaks of the sacramental “bread” as being “the medicine of immortality, our antidote that we should not die, but live for ever in Christ Jesus.” And what but erroneous are passages like these:—
“My soul be for yours; and I myself the *expiatory offering* for your Church of Ephesus.” “My soul be *your expiation*, not only now, but when I shall have attained unto God.” “Let no man deceive himself; both the things which are in heaven, and the *glorious angels*, and princes, whether visible or invisible, if they believe not in the blood of Christ, (he did not die for

Epist.
to the
Ephes.
sect. 20.

Sect. 8.

Epist.
to the
Trall.
sect. 13.

Epist.
to the
Smyr.
sect. 6.

angels) it shall be to them to condemnation." But it is not full grown error that we meet with, so much as fancies or extravagancies which gave rise to them in after ages.

II. — FANCIES.

There are many things which may be classed under this term, the following are some specimens ;—

Epist.
to the
Ephes.
sect. 6.

" The more any one sees his bishop *silent*, the more let him *reverence* him. It is therefore evident that we ought to look upon the *bishop even as we would upon the Lord himself*."

Epist.
to the
Trall.
sect. 5.

" Am I not able to write to you of heavenly things? But I fear lest I should harm you who are but babes in Christ ; (excuse me this care) and lest perchance, being not able to receive them, ye should be choked with them. For even I myself, although I am in bonds, yet am not therefore able to understand heavenly things : as the places of the angels and the several companies of them, under their respective princes, things visible and invisible ; but in these I am yet a learner. For many things are wanting to us, that we come not short of God." How foolish and strange is all this, and betokens a mind not altogether free from conceit.

Epist.
to the
Ephes.
sect. 19.

" Now the virginity of Mary, and he who was born of her, was kept in secret from the prince of this world, as was also the death of our Lord : three of the mysteries the most spoken of throughout the world, yet done in secret by God." What a frivolous fancy or tale was this !

How much like a Jewish tale or a tradition of the elders ! He tells us also, that the star which appeared to the wise men, “ shone in heaven beyond all other stars,” and that “ all the rest of the stars, with the sun and the moon, were the chorus to this star.” This of course, according to some, is an apostolic tradition, faithfully preserved by Ignatius. I say, that it is a shoot from a Jewish stock, which still retained its roots in many of the Jews who turned Christians. Ibid.

III. — EXTRAVAGANCIES.

I do not know what else I can call the following passage, in which he represents the saints,

“ As being the stones of the temple of the Father, prepared for his building, and drawn up on high by the cross of Christ, as *by an engine*, using the Holy Ghost *as the rope*.”

What but extravagant are passages like these :—

“ See that ye all follow your bishops, as Jesus Christ the Father ; and the presbytery as the apostles ; and reverence the deacons as the command of God.”

“ It is a good thing to have a due regard both to God and to the bishop : he that honours the bishop shall be honoured of God. But he that does any thing without his knowledge, ministers to the devil :”—

“ Ye are therefore with all your companions in the same journey, *full* of God ; his spiritual temples, full (carriers) of Christ, full (carriers) of holiness ; adorned in all things with the commands of Christ.” This language goes clearly far beyond the limits of sober truth ; and

Epist.
to the
Ephes.
sect. 9.

Epist.
to the
Smyr.
sect. 8.

sect. 9.

Epist.
to the
Ephes.
sect. 9.

and so does the following :—" Let it be your care therefore to come more fully together to the praise and glory of God : for when ye meet fully together in the same place, the powers of the devil are destroyed, and his mischief is dissolved by the unity of your faith." The Devil no doubt exercises his influence in the house of worship, as well as in other places ; and there often in a way more ruinous than any where else. The connecting of great things with mere outward means, is one prominent mistake throughout these epistles ; and this was one of the main sources of error in the primitive Church ; and in the Church throughout all ages.

I shall add no more on these particular subjects. The foregoing extracts sufficiently shew that Ignatius is no very safe guide. He was evidently a man of great zeal and ardour, but was deficient in sobriety of mind and sound judgment. He was what all of us have seen some to be in our day, humble and yet vain, honest but credulous, devoted to his calling, and yet somewhat superstitious, confessing himself unworthy and yet entertaining not only high but extravagant ideas of his office, and indeed of all official characters. There is indeed a strain of extravagance running through all his epistles. His conduct was the same. He shews himself quite impatient for martyrdom, and wrote an epistle to the Romans on purpose to dissuade them from making any efforts to get him released. He earnestly prays them not to interfere in his behalf. That this sort of spirit was wholly inconsistent with what the Scriptures teach, needs not to be proved. How different was the conduct of Paul ! He requested his brethren to pray *for* his release. He was willing to undergo any evils, when it pleased God ; but he did not *court* persecution and *seek* martyrdom as

Vide
Appendix,
I.

Ignatius did. To account for the spirit of the latter is not difficult to any one that will read his epistles with any attention. He attaches very great merit to martyrdom: in his epistle to the Romans we meet with such expressions as these :—" It is easy for you to do what you please ; but it will be *hard for me to attain unto God*, if you spare me," Sect. 1. that is evidently, by procuring his release. " Ye cannot do me a greater kindness than to suffer me to be *sacrificed* unto God, now that the altar is already prepared." " I am ready to die for God, except you hinder me." " Suffer me to be Sect. 2. food for the wild beasts, *by whom I shall attain unto God* : for I am the wheat of God ; and I shall be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that *I may be found the pure bread of Christ*." " Pardon me in this matter ; I know what is *profitable to me*. Now I *begin to be a disciple*." Sect. 4. Sect. 5.

However we may admire this spirit, it was clearly generated in a great measure by views of martyrdom not altogether scriptural. Martyrdom came to be considered in the Church not only as meritorious, but also as means of expiating for sins, and of attaining eternal life ; and the language of Ignatius goes very much to countenance such an opinion ; and there is especially a passage of this kind in the relation of Polycarp's martyrdom, which is this: " Being supported by the grace of Christ, they (the martyrs) despised all the torments of the world ;—*by the sufferings of an hour, redeeming themselves from everlasting punishments*." Sect. 2.

The way in which the extravagant language of individuals has produced so many evils, has been this :—They were extremely venerated, and every thing they said was deemed almost Divine, there being not sufficient light and

knowledge to distinguish between what was human and Divine, between what was weak, vain, and superstitious, and what was truly dignified, disinterested, and consistent with the spirit of the Gospel. And when persons were once canonized, it was difficult to rid the public mind from the undue veneration that was entertained. This has continued in some degree even to the present day. There is in some an exorbitant notion of the merits and excellency of the primitive Fathers. That many of them were very zealous and devoted to God, there can be no doubt; but in right views of religious truth, in enlarged knowledge, and in enlightened piety, they are far inferior to the latter Fathers, and especially to modern divines. When will people be released from the enchantments of antiquity! and cease to adore the ancients, as the Heathens did their primitive heroes!

But it would be wrong to leave *Ignatius*, without acknowledging the excellency of some parts of his epistles. There is a more evangelical strain in them than in any of the works of the other apostolical Fathers. The Saviour and his atonement, and the work of the Spirit, are far more frequently referred to than in their writings. Repentance is mostly the theme of Clement, Barnabas and Hermas; and there is very little of the Saviour and his works in either of them. Ignatius is in this respect far superior to them.

*One
Repen-
tance.*

Here I may notice the disagreement that seems to exist between Ignatius and Hermas on the subject of *repentance*. The *one* repentance of Hermas is not to be found in Ignatius, but what evidently appears inconsistent with it. He says:—"As many as shall with repentance return to the unity of the Church, even these shall be also the servants

of God, that they may live according to Jesus Christ." And again, in the same epistle, "The Lord forgives *all* that repent, if they return to the unity of God." Not a word is said about *one* repentance, even in the very places where it ought to have been mentioned, if this was the commonly received doctrine. *Clement's* language agrees with what Ignatius, and not with what Her-
 mas says. In his first Epistle, he exhorts the Corinthians to repent, without saying any thing about *one* repentance. "Hence," he says, "we find how all the ministers of the grace of God, (that is, Noah, Jonah, &c. to whom he had previously referred) have spoken by the holy Spirit of repentance. And even the Lord of all has himself declared with an oath concerning it, "As I live, saith the Lord, I desire not the death of a sinner, but that he should repent." Then he quotes Ezek. xviii. 30--32; Isaiah i. 16, 18, &c. thus putting repentance under the Gospel on the same footing with repentance under the old dispensation. Then he concludes the eighth section thus: "These things has God established by his Almighty will, desiring that all his beloved should come to repentance." And more express still is his testimony in the 7th Section: "Let us look stedfastly," he says, "to the blood of Christ, and see how precious his blood is in the sight of God: which being shed for our salvation, has obtained the grace of repentance for all the world. Let us search into all the ages that have gone before us, and let us learn, that our Lord has in every one of them still given place to repentance to *all* such as would turn to him." All this he was pressing on the attention of the professing, but the refractory members of the Corinthian Church. And it was

Epist.
to
Philip.

sect. 3.

sect. 8.

Clement's
Epist.

sect. 8.

Sect. 7.

not "tears" and penance, according to the men of the Oxford Tracts, which obtained the grace of repentance, but the "blood of Christ, shed for our salvation." But I proceed to notice :—

IV.—THE EPISTLE OF POLYCARP.

He was the Bishop of *Smyrna*, a contemporary in part with Ignatius, but outlived him about thirty years. The only thing that remains of his writings is an epistle to the Philippians, written most probably in the year 117. It appears that he has written other epistles ; but they are not extant. He seemed to be a sounder and more sober divine than Ignatius, though his zeal was evidently of a colder temperature. He was evidently a man of great worth and influence in his day, and as it appears, deservedly so. His epistle is short, occupying about ten pages, and contains nothing, as far as I can see, but what is scriptural.

- I quote the following passages, in which he appeals to Scripture, and recommends it to the attention and perusal of the Philippians :—referring them to the Epistle which the "renowned Paul" wrote to them, he says,—
- Sect. 3. "Into which if you look, you will be able to *edify yourselves in the faith*, that has been delivered unto you." Having referred to Antichrist and the spread of errors, he exhorts them thus :—
- Sect. 7. "Wherefore, leaving the vanity of many, and their false doctrines, let us *return to the word that was delivered to us from the beginning.*"
- Sect. 9. Again, He exhorts them to "Obey the *word of righteousness,*" which could be no other than the word of God.

And he expresses his hope of them thus :—" I trust that ye are well *exercised in the Holy Scriptures*, and that nothing is hid from you." Can a Romish Bishop or Priest express a hope of this kind? How is it possible, when he keeps the Scriptures from his people? And the men of the Oxford Tracts would have evidently their people rather exercised in Catholic Tradition, than in the Holy Scriptures. They would have the people first to hear their teaching, which is the teaching of Tradition; and after having filled their minds with that which is no better than Romish legends, they pretend then to send them to the word of God for confirmation! First prejudice the mind and fill it with folly, and then let the word of God be consulted! This is the new wisdom of the Protestants of Oxford! Using the words of Polycarp, we would say to their people, "Leave the vanity of many and their false doctrines, and return to the *word* that was delivered unto you from the beginning," which is no other than the word of God. Sect. 12.

Connected with *Ignatius* and *Polycarp* are the "Relations of their Martydoms," occupying about twenty-four pages. I have already noticed the martyrdom of *Ignatius*. The account, which is short, was drawn up, as it is said, by his friends soon after the event. There is one sentence in it which I shall transcribe, as it shews the general character of *Ignatius'* preaching, and bears upon some Romish notions in the present day.

"Wherefore continuing a few years longer with the Church (a previous persecution is referred to), and after the manner of a Divine lamp illuminating the hearts of the faithful by *the exposition of the Holy Scriptures* (mark, not by tradition), he attained to what he desired." Sect. 2.

The martyrdom of *Polycarp* took place about the year 147. He was burnt alive, like our reformers. The "Relation," drawn up soon after, is contained in an epistle from the Church at Smyrna to the Church at Philadelphia, and to "all other assemblies of the holy Catholic Church." The conduct of Polycarp under his trial was much more Christian and dignified than that of Ignatius, and equally courageous. He avoided his enemies as long as it was practicable; and when he was taken, he stood his ground nobly and manfully, and manifested a spirit truly apostolical.

- The answer of Polycarp to the Proconsul, when required to swear and reproach Christ, is worthy of being mentioned always with his name; it was this:—"Eighty and six years have I now served Christ; and he has never done me the least wrong: How then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?"
- Sect. 9. The *courting* of persecution is expressly disapproved of in this "Relation." The sentence is this:—"We do not commend those who *offer* themselves
- Sect. 4. to persecution, seeing the Gospel teaches no such thing." It is evident that at *that* time, nothing was considered right but what the Gospel sanctioned. If tradition sanctions a thing now, and any Scripture can be so twisted as to give it any support, it is quite enough for the men of the Oxford Tracts. The boast of being primitive, however, does not in this respect avail them at all. There is one more extract which I shall make from this relation. The authorities took care to prevent the Christians from having any part of Polycarp's body, "lest," as it was said, "forsaking him that was crucified, they should begin to worship this Polycarp." The "relation" then goes on thus:—"And this he (the adversary) said at the suggestion and instigation

of the Jews, who also watched us, that we should not take him out of the fire; not considering, that neither is it possible for us ever to forsake Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all such as should be saved throughout the whole world, the righteous for the ungodly; nor *worship any other besides him*. For him indeed, as being the Son of God, we do adore: but for the martyrs, we worthily love them, as the disciples and followers of our Lord, and upon the account of their exceeding great affection towards their Master and their King. Of whom may we be also made companions and fellow-disciples."

Sect. 17.

This passage, I suspect, is not exactly to the taste of the men of the Oxford Tracts. Their attempt to restore Saints' days, and to canonize poor Bishop *Ken*, betokens a disposition very much akin to popery. It is a retrograde motion towards Rome and its mummeries. Reverence for the faithful, and especially for the martyred dead, was beginning to grow even at this time in the primitive Church, as is evident from the "relation" of Ignatius' martyrdom: but it continued growing for some ages, before it attained its maturity and became formally acknowledged. This very disclaimer, though satisfactory in itself, yet seems to imply that there was then an inclination to what was excessive. But how strongly does it bear against saint worship! and how it exposes its extreme folly! "But for martyrs, we worthily love them," and in what capacity? As "disciples and followers of our Lord," and as "fellow-disciples." How strange then that we should worship and pray to disciples and fellow-disciples! But we shall have this folly committed in this land, if the wise men of the Oxford Tracts succeed in their schemes, and corrupt and stultify

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K.

the country with their doctrines. But while the passage demolishes saintworship, it establishes the worship of Christ as the Son of God. It opposes both the Papists and the Socinians,—the two extremes, which come far nearer each other than many suppose. The Papist divides the worship, and thereby effectually makes it void, as to the Saviour, who allows of no rival; and the Socinian denies it altogether:—and both can join freely in all the vain and dissipating amusements of the world;—the Papist even on Sunday after his morning devotions; and the other is not over-scrupulous about the observance of any part of that day. And this clearly proves that the character of their religion is not very dissimilar. No worship is genuine, but what is sanctifying, and makes heavenly impressions on our minds and affections, elevating our thoughts above, and alienating our hearts from, such vain objects, as delight the ungodly and worldly-minded.

I have now completed my review of the Apostolical Fathers. If you will insert these letters, and your readers wish me to proceed, I may be inclined to carry on my work to the end of the *second* century, at least so far as to notice the principal works, that is, of *Justin Martyr* and *Irenæus*.—I shall conclude at present with two remarks:—

1. There is nothing in the apostolical Fathers to countenance the idea of tradition, that is, that the apostles delivered any thing to them that was peculiar, to be handed down to posterity: nor do they say that they received any particular explanation of Scripture on any point: nor do their writings contain any thing but what is contained in Scripture, except some reveries and fancies, which may be much more fairly traced to the Rabbinical Jews than to the

apostles. *And if these writings contain no traditions either as to doctrines or practices, where are they to be found?* They form the chain of connexion between the apostles and succeeding ages, and if they convey no traditions, it must follow that what their successors report is nothing better than idle tales, the mere gossip of the most talkative.

2. There is nothing in the writings of these men which entitles them to any great attention. They are evidently the productions of men who were pious, honest, and zealous, but destitute of learning, defective in solid judgment, and withal somewhat superstitious. Were their writings the productions of the present age, they would not be noticed; and many who now seem to admire them would despise them. "That which I complain of," says *Jeremy Taylor*, and very justly, "is, that we look upon wise men that *lived long ago*, with so much *veneration* and *mistake*, that we reverence them not for having been wise men, but *that they lived long since*." The truth is, Sir, and it ought to be told and avowed, that modern divines, especially since the Reformation, are giants in divinity, compared with the dwarfs of the primitive Church.

MISOPAPISTICUS.

IV.

SIR,

Jan. 22, 1838.

Before I proceed further in my examination of the works of the early Fathers, I shall interpose this letter; in which I intend making some remarks connected with the works already noticed. I have said in a previous letter, that the darkest or the most ignorant, or, what perhaps I should have said, the most illiterate age of the primitive Church, was the first, reaching down to the end of the second century. This may be considered to have been a wise dispensation of God, in order to cut off, as much as possible, any channel through which oral tradition might have been conveyed, to which mankind have ever been immoderately and foolishly attached. I am aware of the conjectures of the admirers of antiquity on this point, and the sort of *a priori* reasoning which they adopt. But their conjectures and reasoning do not comport with the circumstances of the times. The history of the Israelites presents in some respects a similar case. After their miraculous deliverance from Egypt, the giving of the law and the appointment of religious ordinances, their condition as a religious people

became *very soon* exceedingly deteriorated ; but in course of time it improved greatly, that is, under the latter judges and the first kings, as the condition of the primitive Church did as to learning and knowledge in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries. But this improvement among the Israelites was followed, as in the case of the Church, by gradual corruption, until, after various changes, sometimes for the better, but mostly for the worse, they ceased to be the acknowledged people of God. The same thing may be said of the Western Church, the Church of Rome ; it has long ceased to be a part of the true Church ; for how can an heretical and antichristian Church be the Church of Christ ? Similar to the condition of the Jews, it is evidently in a state of apostasy, and has especially one mark which belongs to the Jews, an attachment to oral traditions.

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Appendix,
L.

I think it right to specify more particularly my reasons for the opinion which I have expressed ; and they are in part the following :—

1. The moral and religious, or rather the immoral and irreligious, state of the world at the time. Both the Jews and the Gentiles were exceedingly ignorant and debased in mind and conduct. The Jews had their minds filled with Rabbinical and traditionary tales, and the Gentiles with mythological and idolatrous absurdities. Hence the extravagant opinions and the fantastic notions of the heretics of the age, with which the minds of Christians, as it appears from Paul's Epistles, were in a measure tainted : and some traces of which we find in the writings of the earliest Fathers : and these are some of the traditions that came down to posterity, and are said by some to have come from the apostles, but, which, in fact, came from Judaizing and Gen-

tilizing teachers; of which I shall hereafter afford some proofs.

2. The first Christians and those in the succeeding century were mostly of the lower orders. They were indeed truly religious, but as little competent as such in our day, to transmit any thing to posterity, except the main truths of the Gospel; and even these were much more safely and correctly conveyed to future ages by the writings of the apostles than by them.

Vide
Appendix,
M.

3. The reproofs and remonstrances we meet with in the inspired epistles. Some seem to think that the apostles left the Churches in almost a perfect state. What was taught them by the apostles was perfect; but it was not perfectly learnt, or perfectly followed, any more than in the present day; and we may gather from the reproofs given, what their peculiar mistakes were. Fables, useless questions, traditions, observance of days, will-worship, voluntary humility, &c.; these are some of the things which were prevailing, and with which the apostles had to combat. And these are some of the very things made too much of afterwards by the early Fathers. And we may add to these the overvaluing of outward ordinances and of ministers, as in the case of the Corinthians. Preaching and the administration of baptism by certain ministers were considered as matters of vast importance; for which the apostle strongly and expressly reproveth them.

4. The fact, that the writings of Clement, Ignatius, Barnabas, and Hermas, were read at first in the churches as if they had been inspired books. Whether all these are authentic or not, which is doubted by some, makes no difference in the case; the fact of their being read in churches

during the second century is clear both from Irenæus and Eusebius. Those who could listen to the reveries of Her-
mas, could not be altogether free from the mania of super-
stition, nor from the taint of Jewish traditions.

5. The fact, that all the writings of the sacred penmen were not then collected together, and were not universally known and read. When they became more generally known and read, the writings of Hermas and others were discontinued : and it was owing to the inspired writings becoming more known, that the Church became more enlightened, and not owing to any stock of tradition being left by the apostles to the Church. And the later Church had wisdom enough to discard some things adopted by the earlier, but not all that ought to have been discarded. There were two things which operated much in favour of retaining what had been handed down :—The first was, the necessity under which the Church found itself of appealing to what had been previously taught and practised, owing to the heretics, who claimed tradition in favour of their sentiments ;—and the other was, the repute and veneration which many of the first Christians gained by their martyrdoms. Even their relics were deemed as sacred : and no wonder, if their opinions, and even their fancies, were looked upon with no ordinary respect. Such instances of Christian sincerity and firmness have been too often viewed as proofs of infallibility.

What may be truly and justly said of the first and early Christians is this :—They were sincere, self-denying, patient under sufferings, holy, and remarkable for unity and love towards each other : and in all these respects they are examples worthy of imitation. But their knowledge of Scrip-

ture was by no means great, and their views of the scheme and doctrines of the Gospel were neither enlarged nor in all respects accurate, their means of information being comparatively very limited. They did not possess one-twentieth part of the advantages of the present day. Their condition as to the means of knowledge was ~~far~~ inferior to that of converts in our day in heathen lands. Our converts in India, in Africa, and the South-sea islands, enjoy privileges unknown to the primitive Christians. How, therefore can they be looked upon as infallible expounders of the Scripture, or as persons conveying to us any additional information, when in fact they seem to *come short themselves of much that the Divine word contains*, and when their writings contain some things which it does not teach, and which are not consistent with its doctrines? What Dr. Cave, in his "*Primitive Christianity*," says of them, is most true. "Their creed," he says, "in the *first* ages was *short* and *simple*; their faith lying then, not so much in nice and numerous articles, as in a good and honest life."

The vicious principle of accommodating the ceremonial law to the Gospel, was the origin of many of the mistakes of the primitive Church, especially as to the ministerial character and the sacraments, as I shall show in a future letter. And the corrupting effects of this principle continue even to the present day. That this principle was adopted by the earliest Fathers is quite apparent from their writings, and even from the few extracts which I have already given; and that it continued to be adopted to a considerable extent, is evident from the writings of many of their successors. This may appear strange when we consider how strongly and explicitly the apostles have asserted the abrogation of the

ceremonial law. But we must bear in mind that the *ancient* Scriptures were more common among the earlier Christians than the writings of the apostles, especially the epistles, which speak most expressly on that subject,—and also, that many of them were Jews by birth and education. It may be said that the preaching of the apostles, while living, counteracted this evil. No doubt it did. But neither did their preaching nor their writings, which contained what they preached, as *Irenæus* expressly tells us, wholly succeed in eradicating this evil. As during their lives, so when their writings became generally known and read, the practice of ceremonializing the Gospel, if I may use such an expression, still continued, and in a measure prevailed. The sanction which the first Fathers gave to this principle had an undue weight: and some of the extravagances to which the principle gave rise, assumed, in after-ages, the form and shape of positive errors, which are said, and have been long said, by the Church of Rome, to have been derived through the Fathers from the apostles themselves. Thus the fruits of a seed which neither their preaching nor their writings could wholly destroy, are ascribed to their own labours! Some of the things advocated by the Oxford Tracts are of this kind. They are the effects of the Judaizing leaven that was in the primitive Church; and it seems, that because the Fathers had some of that leaven (though they sometimes disavow it), they must have derived it from the apostles, while the efforts of the apostles, as it is evident from their epistles, was throughout most strenuously exerted in purging it out of the Church. See Col. ii. 8, 16, 18, 20—23. Gal. ii. 12, 13; iv. 9—12. 1 Tim. iv. 1—3. Titus i. 14. Heb. xiii. 9.

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Appendix,
N.

A great difficulty occurs respecting the early Fathers, that is, how to distinguish what they received from the apostles, and what they did not receive. They declare their sentiments nearly in the same way, without saying, except in a few instances, and those regarding the main truths, what had been received from the apostles. For instance, what *Ignatius* says about the virginity of Mary, and the death of our Saviour, being "kept secret from the prince of this world," is announced in the same way as what he says about the sacramental "bread" being "the medicine of immortality, our antidote that we should not die." The first, I take for granted, most will regard only as a Jewish tale, while some may be disposed to regard the second as a holy doctrine derived from the apostles. But there is no evidence of the latter being more so than the former. If we deem one a Jewish fiction, we may deem the other as something of the same sort. But it may be said, that those who came after made the distinction. How came they to make it? Both are declared in the same way; there is no difference in the mode of announcing them. Now, if *some* of the things said by *Ignatius* and others of the apostolic Fathers, who conversed with the apostles and heard them preach, are such as no reasonable man can believe to have been derived from the apostles, how is it possible to draw the line of distinction? It *cannot* be drawn in any other way than by comparing their writings with those of the sacred penmen. Let, if he can, any man propose any other mode of procedure that reason and common sense will approve.

But the consent of the Fathers, a Romish figment to screen all abuses, and justify all absurdities, is resorted to. What they approved, it seems, is to be approved, and what

they discarded is to be discarded. But how came the later Fathers to know what the earliest handed down from the apostles, and what they delivered as their own sentiments? Was it by tradition? Then how did that tradition come unto them? It could not have been any other than oral tradition. They must then have sifted and purged the written tradition of the apostolic Fathers by the oral tradition of the Church. Thus oral tradition overruled the written one, the Romish tradition prevailed over the Oxford Tracts tradition, and both traditions, after all, are not worth a single straw. And here I might ask, how came the writings of Clement and Hermas, which are quoted as Scripture by Irenæus, to be afterwards disowned as such? They were evidently read as such in the early Churches. If it be said, that they were not *universally* read, and were on that ground rejected; then, in that case, some of the apostolic epistles must have been rejected; for it was some time before they were universally known and adopted; but finally they were, and why? Not because of universal consent in their favour from the first; but, doubtless, because there were other proofs, both external and internal, afforded, which gave satisfaction that they were what they were said to be. Their authority was established not by tradition, or by the concurrence of the universal Church from the beginning, from the time in which they were written, but by such other proofs as were satisfactory, as "the manner of the phrase and style, and the drift and meaning of the things delivered;" as Eusebius says, when he speaks of the proofs by which spurious books were decided to be such.

It is said by Archbishop *Wake*, that the works of the apostolic Fathers are the only writings now extant, not

Vide
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spurious, which we have after the New Testament, till the *middle* of the *second* century. We have therefore, no other documents but them for fifty years at least, after the last of the Apostles. What traditions, therefore, we can possibly have from the apostles must be from these writings, except what was handed down by word of mouth, or orally. We all know what changes may take place in the opinions of any large body of men during fifty years, and what credit can be given to what is orally reported for such a term of years, except in case of well and widely known facts and broad truths, such as the essentials of the Gospel. As to particular opinions and interpretations, no dependence can be placed on such a mode of conveyance. What great changes on many points took place in our Church, especially as to its leading members, within fifty years after the Reformation? And these changes took place, when not avowed, but even denied. *If we are to judge of what was orally conveyed, as to doctrines and interpretations, by what has been conveyed by the writings of the apostolic Fathers, (and this is a fair way of judging,) we must conclude that much that was extravagant, foolish, and even erroneous, was thus conveyed. And what was thus conveyed supplied a portion of the stock of future traditions! so much valued now by the British Magazine and the Oxford Tracts! It was through such a channel as this, it seems, that the later Fathers derived their expositions of baptism, of the Lord's Supper, and of other things! a channel, which, if it was as good as the writings of the first Fathers, could have been by no means safe or certain. But they must have been indebted for their interpretations to a channel of oral tradition much longer than this; for the writings of*

Justin Martyr and *Irenæus*, which form the principal documents, not only of what now exists, but of whatever has existed, till the *end*, or nearly the end of the second century, give little or no countenance to their expositions. So that for nearly 100 years after the death of John, and more than 130 after the death of Peter and Paul, they had scarcely anything for their interpretations, but oral tradition, the most varying and uncertain thing in the world. Any exposition derived from a source of this kind must be very uncertain and of no value ; and to adopt and announce it as derived from the apostles is nothing less than an attempt to impose on the credulity of mankind. There is *nothing certain or worthy of credit* respecting what the apostles taught and practised, but what is contained in their own writings, as the great *Chillingworth* most distinctly avows and asserts in his *Religion of Protestants*.

The interpretations and peculiar opinions of the fathers of the third and fourth and fifth centuries, were their own, or those of the Church in their time, and are incapable of being traced back to the apostles. There is no chain but that of oral tradition, on which none can depend, except they who wish to deceive themselves and others. The peculiarities of these Fathers, that is, such things as are not clearly taught in Scripture or are inconsistent with it, were either their own or those of the Church in their day, or derived from the hocus-pocus of oral tradition. And this oral tradition, as a snowball, collected, as it rolled onward, new accretions from Jewish rites and traditions, heathen ceremonies, and even from heretical customs and sentiments, but not from any thing that was really apostolical, as I intend fully to show hereafter, especially

with regard to two subjects,—baptism and the Lord's Supper.

There is one other point to which I have already alluded, which requires a more specific notice : it is that of miraculous gifts in the early Church ; on account of which some are disposed to attach great importance to its opinions. That it did possess such gifts in the *second* century, is evident from the express testimony of Justin Martyr and Irenæus. But to admit this, is not to admit the Church to be free from errors and mistakes in minor points of doctrine or practice. The possession of such gifts is consistent, not only with a weak judgment, and defective and even wrong views in religion, but with an unregenerate state. Balaam possessed the extraordinary gift of prophecy. Judas, as well as the other apostles, performed miracles. And what was the case of the other apostles themselves, before our Lord's crucifixion ? They had evidently very imperfect knowledge of the mystery of redemption : it was not till our Saviour suffered that it was clearly understood by them, though they had previously conferred on them many miraculous gifts. Many of the members of the Corinthian Church had these gifts ; and St. Paul reproved them for many things wrong in their conduct and proceedings. We ought to distinguish between gifts of this kind and the gift of inspiration. The latter is justly conceded only to the writers of the New Testament, while the former were possessed by many not only in the Apostle's time, but for a considerable period after that ; how long it is difficult to determine. The possession of them, however, did not secure the Church from mistakes either in doctrine or practice.

Now I would ask, on *what* grounds is such importance attached to the opinions of the Fathers, either of the early or of the late Fathers? Were any of them *inspired*? I am not aware that any will say this roundly: and if any will say so, they will say what is not worthy of credit. Were they *more learned* than divines in modern times, especially after the discovery of Printing, and the Reformation? This, I presume, will not be asserted; and if asserted, it cannot be proved. Modern divines *ought* to be more learned than they; for they have vastly greater advantages, more books, far more opportunities for information, and more of every thing necessary for the attainment of Divine knowledge. Moderns may stand, as Lord Bacon says, on the shoulders of the ancients, and be thereby enabled to see much farther. But instead of standing thus on their shoulders, the men of the *British Magazine* and of the Oxford Tracts seem to crouch and lay themselves prostrate before the Fathers, like the heathens before their wooden idols; and with amazing show of humility, they receive and collect what may fall from their lips, be it wise or be it foolish, be it a scriptural truth or a traditionary figment, and lay it up as something oracular. The infatuation of the learned is oftentimes greater than the infatuation of the ignorant.

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I would ask again, on *what* grounds is so much weight attached to their opinions? Is it because of their superior judgment, sobriety, and penetration in interpreting the Scriptures? This cannot be conceded so long as sound reasoning, extensive knowledge of the Divine word, solid learning, consistency, and common sense, are deemed necessary requisites. Is it then because they *derived* their

interpretations *from the Apostles*? Let those prove this who can. But it is incapable of being proved, though it may be easy to assert it. There is no channel of conveyance that any reasonable man can put any confidence in. What Bishop Jeremy *Taylor* asserts is most true, when he says, "There are *no such things* as traditive interpretations universal." But is it on the ground of their *piety*? It remains to be proved that they possessed this in a higher degree than many moderns. It was undoubtedly mixed with a great deal of superstition; and superstition is of all things the most unfavourable to the exercise of correct judgment.

Once more I ask, what are the grounds on which so much deference is paid to the opinions of the Fathers? Is it because some of them *suffered martyrdom* in the cause of truth? This was, indeed, a proof of sincerity and Christian firmness. But there have been moderns who have done the same, and in a spirit far more worthy of the Gospel. Our martyred Reformers afford examples of this kind, which far outshine, in many respects, any to be found among the ancients. There are not to be met with in the primitive Church any martyrs, except, perhaps, *Polycarp*, who can be compared with our *Latimer*, *Ridley*, and some others, who not only stood firm, but were also humble and temperate in spirit, and collected in mind, combining with the courage of the lion, the meekness of the lamb, and with the wisdom of the serpent, the innocency of the dove. Their trial was far more difficult than that of any of the ancients. The primitive Christians had to contend with avowed enemies of religion, who required them to do what was palpably and grossly wicked and idolatrous, so that the mind had no difficulty to

istinguish between what was right and wrong ; while our Reformers had to deal with the subtle, cunning, and jesuitical emissaries of hell, the ministers of Satan transformed into angels of light, who by their diabolical sophistry tried all means to embarrass and confound them ; by which they unhappily succeeded for a short time with our venerable Cranmer. But in spite of this peculiar pressure of their trial, they remained firm and resolute, and shewed a Christian courage, accompanied with such submissiveness and meekness of spirit, and settled collectedness of mind, as are to be found in scarcely any of the ancients. There was in the primitive martyrs an excess of zeal, a haste, a forwardness, an enthusiasm, which clearly proves, that they were in some measure intoxicated with the drug of superstition. They were too much like heathen devotees. If martyrdom then, borne in the true spirit of the Gospel, be a recommendation to any opinions, we ought to regard those of our Reformers, far more than those of the ancient Fathers.

We can therefore find no reason to ascribe superiority to the Fathers. If there be any reason, let it be distinctly specified ; and let us not be beguiled into fancies and errors by names of men who have no right whatever to overrule our judgment, and who were far inferior to many modern divines in every thing necessary to qualify persons to interpret Scripture, correctly, soberly, rightly, and consistently. What *Arminius* said of *Calvin's Commentaries*, I have no doubt is perfectly just, that is, that, "they are more valuable than anything that the Fathers have left us." * The same may be said with truth of the Commentaries of *Scott* and *Henry*. In enlarged and consistent views of Divine truth,

Scott.
Henry.

* I shall give the passage entire ; and it is especially creditable to Ar-

and in the application of scriptural verities to the experience and practice of Christians, who among the ancients can be compared with Scott? And in elevated piety, and evangelical train of thought, who of the ancients can compete with Henry? But the truth is, that, in the estimation of some, the term ancient, or primitive, carries with it amazing authority; it sheds a lustre over what is foolish, beautifies what is ugly, dignifies what is vulgar, moderates what is extravagant, and converts what is fanciful and erroneous, into sober and solid truth. The heathens made gods of their ancient heroes: and the men of the Oxford Tracts would make a sort of gods in divinity of the ancient Fathers. It is blind, infatuated, and superstitious human nature, in both instances.

MISOPAPISTICUS.

minius, as he differed from *Calvin* on many important points:—"Dico enim incomparabilem esse in interpretatione Scripturarum, et majoris faciendos ipsius commentarios quam quicquid Patrum bibliotheca nobis tradit; adeo ut et spiritum aliquem prophetiæ eximium illi præ aliis plerisque, imo et omnibus concedam.—For I declare him to be incomparable in the interpretation of the Scriptures, and that his Commentaries are more to be valued than any thing the library of the Fathers delivers to us; so that I concede to him even a certain excellent spirit of prophecy beyond most others, yea, even beyond all."—*Brandt's life of Arminius, quoted in the Edinburgh Review, No. 109. 1832.*

V.

JUSTIN MARTYR.

SIR,

February 1, 1838.

What I propose to do in this Letter is to give some account of the character of *Justin Martyr's* writings. They are justly deemed more valuable than any that appeared previously from the close of inspiration. He was far superior in attainments to any of the apostolic fathers, and by no means inferior to them in zeal and piety, nor in Christian courage and firmness. His principal works were his *First Apology for the Christians*, and his *Dialogue with Tryphon*, the Jew. There are also works of his, called, *A Word* (λογος) *to the Greeks*,—*An Admonitory Word* (λογος παραναιετικός) *to the Greeks*,—*concerning Monarchy*,—*A Second Apology*,—and an *Epistle to Diognetus*, which seems to be of a very dubious authority. His first apology is evidently the best of his works.

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Martyr.

Though he was the ablest apologist, yet he was not the first. There were at least two before him. The first was *Quadratus*, Bishop of Athens, who presented an apology for the Christians to the Emperor *Adrian*, about the year 126.

Aristides. The other was *Aristides*, a Christian philosopher; as he has been called, living at Athens, who soon after addressed an apology to the same Emperor. Eusebius speaks well of both these apologies, and says, that they were in the possession of many of the brethren in his day, that is, in the fourth century; but they are not now extant. Like some other works of that day, (for the most part small treatises,) they evidently did not possess sufficient interest to command that attention and care necessary to transmit them to posterity. To suppose that the best books are lost is to suppose what is contrary to all experience. The writings that are forgotten are generally the least meritorious; and those which continue to be read are generally the most valuable. We have, in all probability, very little reason to regret the loss of what has perished of the writings of the Fathers of the second century. What remains of them is of no great value, with the exception of the works of *Justin Martyr* and *Irenæus*. I consider *Tertullian* and *Clemens Alexandrinus* as belonging to the third century.

Justin. *Justin* was a Greek by birth and education, a native of Neapolis, in Palestine, and brought up a Pagan philosopher. He studied, as it appears, all the various systems of Grecian philosophy then known; but the Platonic was what he most admired and adopted. He was converted to Christianity about the year 132, when nearly thirty years of age. About the year 140 he went to Rome, and kept a sort of school for the purpose of furthering the interest of religion, retaining still his garb as a philosopher. In the year 150 he wrote his *First Apology*, addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius and the Roman Senate. After a few years he visited the eastern parts of the empire; and at *Ephesus* he met

accidentally with *Tryphon*, a learned Jew; and the two days dispute he had with him forms the *Dialogue* which he composed, and which is still extant. We find him at Rome again in the year 165, disputing with *Crescens*, a Cynic philosopher; and in the following year he wrote his *Second Apology* addressed to Antoninus Philosophus, the successor of Pius; but in the year 167 he was put to a cruel death for his religion, being first scourged and then beheaded. His conduct, when examined by the Prefect of Rome, was quite worthy of a defender of the faith.

His *First Apology*, as already stated, is a work of great merit; bold, and on the whole respectful; explicit, and for the most part judicious; showing an extensive knowledge of mythology and of the various forms of idolatry, and also an enlarged acquaintance with the Scriptures. He appeals with great force to the justice and equity of the Emperor in behalf of the Christians,—exhibits the injustice of punishing them for no crimes but a name,—defends them from the calumnies with which they were loaded,—shows from the Scriptures what their sentiments were, and the conduct they considered themselves bound to maintain,—proves the truth of their religion by prophecies already fulfilled, and then fulfilling, and by miracles done by Christ and his Apostles and by his followers, even in that age,—exposes the folly, corruption, and absurdities of idolatrous worship,—and relates minutely the religious rites and services performed by Christians. This is a summary of what this *Apology* contains.

His *Second Apology* is short. As in the first, he complains against the injustice of punishing Christians for no crime but for being Christians. He brings instances of this. He

then answers a taunt of the Pagans, who said, "If you are going to God, why do you not destroy yourselves?" He replies, too, to another taunt, which was, "If God is your helper, why does he suffer you to be persecuted and destroyed?" In replying to this cavil he advances some singular things. He says, that when God created the world, he committed the care of it to angels. Some of these betrayed their trust and became rebellious, having been enticed by the beauty of women, with whom they cohabited; and their offspring were the demons, which have ever corrupted, and still continue to corrupt, the world. These demons have been invariably inimical to the logos or reason, and have always been persecuting even those among the heathens who had any portion of this logos, such as Socrates and Heraclitus. But Christ being the perfect logos, and the demons knowing this, they became more enraged against him and his followers than against any previously. And it was these demons that instigated men in power to persecute the Christians. The two following passages will show his opinion:—

- Sect. 5. "God having created the whole world and subjected earthly things to men, and adorned the heavenly elements, which he seems to have made for men, for the increase of fruit and for the change of times, and having ordered this Divine law, delivered the care of men and of things under heaven to angels, whom he appointed over them. But the angels, having gone beyond the order, degraded themselves by improper commerce with women, and begot children, who are those called demons; and they afterwards made mankind slaves to themselves."—"The demons have always caused to be hated all those who in any way were desirous of
- Sect. 8.

living according to reason and of shunning vice. It is no wonder, therefore, if the demons, being reprov'd, should cause them to be much more hated, who live, not according to a portion of seminal reason (σπερματικου λογου,) but according to the knowledge and perception (θεωριαν) of perfect reason which is Christ." Vide
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This opinion was evidently grounded on Gen. vi. 1, 2. But, as in other instances of error, the passage was extended beyond its proper limits, and additions were made to it by no means in accordance with the whole context. But this opinion was not peculiar to *Justin*; *Athenagoras* and *Irenæus*, of the same century, held the same. So that we have the highest authorities of the second century in its favour, and nothing, that I can find, in opposition to it. There is far greater and stronger consent during the second century in its favour than for the existence of three orders in the church. As to bishops, distinct from presbyters, we have no evidence except that of *Ignatius*, for the two first centuries. Clement and Polycarp most clearly recognise but two orders. Barnabas and Hermas having nothing very distinct on the subject. *Justin* mentions only two officers in the Church in his time, whom he calls president (προεστώς) and deacon (διακονος). *Irenæus* uses the terms bishop and presbyter indiscriminately. Thus we see the weight of evidence during the two first centuries is against the three orders, which may naturally create a suspicion, that those passages in *Ignatius*, which refer to them, are interpolations: for he stands alone in what he states, for the two first centuries, and not only alone, but opposed by the strongest authorities during that period.

But with regard to this opinion of Justin, it is countenanced by many in that age. It has as much consent of Fathers as any vagary that can be mentioned. It is adopted too by Fathers of succeeding centuries, by Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Methodius, Origen, Cyprian, Lactantius, and others : and it was not questioned or disputed till the fourth century. It is clearly an interpretation, and Athenagoras in his *Embassy* (*πρεσβεια*) *for the Christians*, manifestly refers it to Scripture. Whence came this interpretation ? From the Apostles, of course, if we adopt the principles of the Oxford Tracts. It was the opinion of the Church, and the Church derived all that it held from the Apostles ! The nearness of the time to the apostolic period is of course strongly in its favour. But after all, it is what has been clearly derived from the rich stock of Jewish traditions. This is more than intimated by *Feuardentius*, the Papist, in his Notes on Irenæus : for he plainly tells us that many of the Rabbins held this opinion. What then is there to enable us to find out whether any other interpretation given by the Fathers is not a Jewish tradition of some sort or another, or some figment of their own ? How, for instance, can what they say of Baptism or of the Lord's Supper be *proved* to have come from the Apostles, any more than this opinion ? But the real fact is, that there is no way to deal with the Fathers, that there is no rule to be adopted in judging of their interpretations and opinions, but what ought to be adopted with respect to uninspired writers in any age, yea, even in our time, that is, to bring them to the test of Scripture, interpreted according to the generally approved rules of sound criticism. The consent

of the Fathers even where it really exists, (and it is said often to exist where it does not,) is no sure evidence of truth, as we clearly see in this instance. But I must return to notice the next work of Justin.

His *Dialogue* with Tryphon is the longest of his writings. He met with this Jew accidentally at Ephesus, in company with some other Jews. The conversation turned on philosophy and religion. Justin relates his own conversion, which was by the means of a venerable old man whom he met while walking in a field near the sea, and whom he never saw afterwards. He was so impressed with what the old man said, that he was induced to read the Scriptures; and the consequence was his conversion to the Christian faith. The *Dialogue* then turns on the points in dispute between Jews and Christians. Justin, by various references to the prophecies and types of the Old Testament, most clearly proves that Jesus was the long-promised Messiah. A great portion of what he brings forward is to be found in his *First Apology*, and there are many repetitions as to the passages referred to and the arguments employed. He was, however, successful in making a happy impression on the mind of Tryphon. There are some parts of this *Dialogue* which would be deemed valuable and useful in the present day. This is what may be justly said of most, if not of all the works of the Fathers. There are parts which are very excellent, while there are others which are very foolish, puerile, fanciful, and unsound. The solutions which Justin gives of some Jewish difficulties are very satisfactory, while others are by no means so, being fanciful and far-fetched. The *Dialogue*, as a whole, is highly credible to Justin, considering the age in which he lived.

Dialogue
with
Tryphon.

After this brief notice of his writings, I shall now add some remarks on their character. There was not much room for him, either in his *Apologies* or in his *Dialogue*, to go into very minute details as to the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel or the practices of the Church. He does this mostly in his *First Apology*; and with regard to the two Sacraments, he is very full and explicit, and gives a particular account of the way in which they were administered. And this account I purpose hereafter to notice in an especial manner; for I intend sending you a letter on each of these subjects; and I mean also to introduce what Irenæus, and others of the two first centuries, have said on them, and at the same time to compare their views with those of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries.

It appears evident that the opinions of Justin were defective and faulty on several points; and as an interpreter of Scripture he is often wild and fanciful.

1. He is by no means clear or correct in his views of Original Sin. He does not seem very distinctly to mark the difference between man when created and man when he became a fallen being. He speaks of him as still possessing the power, independently of Divine grace, of choosing good as well as evil, which he calls *αυτεξουσιος* (self-governing); and he represents fallen man as capable of vice and virtue (*κακίας και αρετης δεκτικος*) in such a way as may lead us to think, that he thought him as strongly disposed to the one as to the other. His views on this subject, and those of Irenæus and of others of that century, seem to be very imperfect; by no means consistent with Scripture, nor with the Articles of our Church, and paved the way, no doubt, for the introduction of the Pelagian heresy; for

had not Pelagius found many in the Church favourable to his sentiments, he would not have met with that success which accompanied the spread of his errors. The Church was doubtless in a great measure *Pelagianized* before Pelagius began his mischievous career. There were combustibles ready to take fire when Pelagius applied his torch.

2. Justin does not appear to have possessed correct views on the great doctrine of Justification by faith. This defect necessarily follows the former : he who does not clearly understand the guilty and sinful state of man, will not be able clearly to comprehend the nature of the remedy provided for him. But it is not only Justin who had but obscure and incorrect views on this subject, but, as I conceive, most, if not all, of the early Fathers. This doctrine, after the Apostle's time, never shone forth in its scriptural brightness till the time of *Augustine*. It was then that the inspired page was sedulously studied, and this rich treasure was brought fully to light. *This was not effected by the help of tradition, for that had in a great measure lost it ; but by the examination and study of the Holy Scriptures, occasioned by the spread of Pelagianism.* That error, though substantially adopted before, and no doubt to a considerable extent, when broadly avowed and systematically taught, aroused, through God's grace, the energies of Augustine and some others, and the great truth, by means of controversy, attained a scriptural clearness unknown to the early Fathers. It retained its lustre for a time, and prevailed over the opposing error ; but it became soon bedimmed ; and though entertained by individuals, it ceased to be the prevailing doctrine of the

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Church, until another *Augustine*—the great Luther—appeared, and, being assisted by other illustrious reformers, dispelled the darkness in which it was involved. What efforts have been since made at different times to becloud and darken this glorious truth! This is evidently one of the objects of the Oxford Tracts. To be freely justified by faith only, is what will not suit the pride of nature, nor the pride of learning.

Justin evidently viewed the Atonement more as the source of Sanctification than of Justification. It is corrupt man, rather than guilty man, that he considers Christ to have come to save. It was to redeem man from the power of the demons, rather than from the curse of the law, that he viewed our Saviour's purpose in coming into the world. It is not so much as an offence against God that he regards sin, but as an evil in its effects on man. His views were right to a certain extent, but they were manifestly defective. The justice and holiness of God were in a great degree lost sight of, while his mercy, love, and grace were mostly regarded. Hence there is a strain of legality running through his writings. The keeping of the commandments, or penitence, instead of faith in Christ, are mostly stated as necessary to salvation. This is invariably the case with those who lose sight of the justice and holiness of God, and consequently of the high demands of the Divine law. And this defect lies at the root of all formality, and of all extreme attachments to outward and ritual observances. Let a man once entertain the notion that he can gain life in any degree by his own works (and this notion he can only have, while his views of Divine justice and holiness are indistinct and obscure),

and he will naturally become enamoured with external rites and ceremonies. And here, I conceive, lies the main root of the errors of the men of the Oxford Tracts. From having inadequate and imperfect views of the high justice and pure sanctity of God and his law, they see not the need of the atoning Sacrifice as the *only* ground of acceptance with God, and of the merits of the Redeemer, as the *only* title to eternal life. Attaching undue importance to human works, and viewing them in some way meritorious, they try to patch up something of their own for the purpose of procuring life. Hence comes the disposition to magnify externals, and to add to the ceremonials of religion. There is no surer sign than this of a self-righteous spirit.

But I have said that Justin was a fanciful interpreter of Scripture. There are especially two faults in him in this respect :—He makes that prophetic which is not so ; and he represents many things as typical which evidently were not so intended.

1. He is apt to find *prophecies* where none exist. This he does in his first *Apology*, as well as in his *Dialogue with Tryphon*. He interprets even the first Psalm prophetically, and in his *Dialogue* he represents the “ tree planted by the rivers of waters ” as referring to the Saviour. He considers the following passage from Isaiah xxxiii. 16, “ Bread shall be given him ; his water shall be sure,” as prophetic of the sacramental bread and cup. “ It is manifest,” he says in his *Dialogue*, “ that even in this prophecy it is foretold concerning the bread, which our Christ has taught us to offer (ποιεῖν) in commemoration of his having been embodied (τοῦ σωματοποιησασθαι αὐτόν) Sect. 70.

for those who believe in him, and for whom he became also passible (παθητός)—and concerning the cup, which he taught us to offer, giving thanks, in commemoration of his blood.” While we may justly consider the prophecy very far-fetched, and even misapplied, we cannot but approve of his language respecting the bread and cup; both are rightly said to be in commemoration (εις αναμνησιν) of what they are intended to signify. Many parts of the first chapter of Isaiah he quotes as prophetic. He applies the words, “Israel doth not know; my people doth not understand,” to the Jews not believing in Christ, and as predictive of their unbelief. “Wash you, and make you clean,” was a prophetic intimation of baptism. Many similar instances might be mentioned; but where he is most fanciful and extravagant is in the following particular:—

2. He makes things *typical* to a ridiculous extent. We meet in his *Dialogue* with many things of this kind:—The lamb of the passover, as fixed on the spit roasting, typified the material cross, being in form and shape like it; how it was so, I cannot well understand, notwithstanding his description;—The offering made by the leper under the law, symbolized the sacramental bread;—The twelve bells appended to the dress of the high priest, signified and typified the twelve Apostles;—The two comings of Christ were symbolically represented by Moses and Joshua, while fighting with the Amalekites; Moses on the hill holding up his hands, represented the cross, which was Christ’s first coming; and Joshua conquering in the field, presignified Christ’s second coming, which is to be for the purpose of overcoming all his enemies;—Moses blessing Joseph, and saying

that "his horns were the horns of unicorns," did thereby give a symbol of the cross; the application of this I am not able to comprehend;—The broken thigh of Jacob was a type of our Saviour's suffering;—The double marriage of Jacob was symbolical of what was afterwards to be done by Christ. This is surely symbolizing run mad, not to be equalled by any reveries of modern times. Many other instances might be adduced, but I shall desist. Notwithstanding these faults, *Justin* deserves great respect. He acted a noble part in defending Christians, and the truth they professed. Considering the age in which he lived, he was eminent, though not to be compared with many in after-ages, especially since the Reformation. There is nothing in his writings that justifies any great confidence in the correctness of his views, or in the justness and sobriety of his interpretations. As a guide, many of our reformers are far before him. There is one thing in him highly to be commended—his constant appeal to the Scriptures; and, as to tradition, independent of what the Scriptures contain, he seems to know nothing about it. Had there been a stock of such commodity, as some vainly think, how came Justin not to draw out of it some of his materials? He blames Tryphon, indeed, for following the traditions of the elders; but he brings forward none of his own, but invites constant attention to the Scriptures. He does the same in his first *Apology*, and offers the Scriptures to the perusal of the Emperor and the Roman Senate. The passage is worth recording, and is as follows:—

"Through the operation of wicked demons, death has been allotted to those who read the books . . . of the prophets; that through fear they might turn aside men

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sect. 4.

who read for the purpose of attaining the knowledge of good things, and might *retain them slaves to themselves*; which, indeed, they have not been able effectually to do; for we not only fearlessly peruse them, but *offer them also to you*, as you see, for your inspection, imagining that they will appear well pleasing to *all*. And if we persuade a few, we shall gain much! for we shall, as good husbandmen, receive a reward from the Lord."

This is truly Protestant, a plain recognition of the principle of the *Bible Society*, but by no means agreeable, as I conceive, to the Papists, or to the Oxford divines. The latter have not *yet* gone quite as far as the former, but they follow them very closely. The Scriptures, it seems, are to be perused under the sanction and with the interpretation of the Church. Of this poor honest Justin knew nothing in the middle of the second century, fifty years after the apostolic age; for he offers the Scriptures to the Emperor and the Senate of Rome "without note or comment," and without introducing the Church or its ministers as interpreters. The Church has grown wiser since, as it appears; by what means it would be desirable to know. The idea that the Church, or those who have "the external mark" of orders, have the *exclusive* right of interpreting the word of God, is a vagary unknown to the first ages, and evidently invented for the same purpose, as Justin says, the wicked demons had in view in inducing men in power to prohibit the perusal of the Scriptures, that is, to "retain them slaves to themselves." This is manifestly the *primum mobile* of all the efforts made by the men of the *British Magazine* and the Oxford Tracts. Let the Bible be sealed or interpreted by tradition, or by

the Church exclusively, and the work of enslaving the minds and consciences of men will be done as completely as in the Church of Rome. It is the same thing, whether done under the name of Protestantism, Anglicanism, or Popery.

The divines alluded to, seem to tread in the very footsteps of the Papists, and the clear tendency of their principles is to enthrall the mind, to fetter reason, and to destroy the exercise of individual judgment. And this is the way, it seems, to produce unity—an unity, which, if it could be effected, would not be that of intelligence, but of blindness,—not of conviction, but of morbid acquiescence,—not of reason, but of slavish compliance. It would be the unity of mute animals trained to work together, of mules and asses well disciplined, and not the unity of rational beings, enlightened, convinced, and acting a reasonable part, in a willing submission to the will and dictates of the Highest. This is the unity of blind Popery, and not of intelligent Protestantism.

In perfect accordance with the last extract, is the account which Justin gives of his own conversion. The venerable old man whom he met did not direct him to consult the Church, as the men of the Oxford Tracts would doubtless do, but called his attention to the Scriptures. It is not, I conceive, improper, under all circumstances, to send an inquirer to an intelligent and pious teacher; but the first point is to give him the word of God. It is to *confine* the business to the Church that is objectionable, and not the making of proper use of the help which its ministers may afford. But the old man did not only direct him to the Scriptures, but gave him, as it were, a *canon* of interpre-

tation, which excels every other, and is far better than the boasted consent of the Fathers, which is a mere figment,—or the decrees of councils, which are human, and full of errors and absurdities,—or the teaching of the Church, which is often very erroneous, and always liable to mistakes. The canon which he prescribed is the safest guide to a right interpretation. It is indeed the only safe guide both to the learned and to the unlearned. Without it the most literate will be sure to grope in the dark as a blind man ; and with it the most illiterate will find sufficient light clearly to see every thing necessary for his salvation. It is, in fact, the *only* key that will unlock the rich treasures of Divine knowledge. And as it is an ancient and primitive canon, all lovers of antiquity, will, I hope, adopt it. They will never otherwise get out of the trammels of error. I shall give it in the old man's words, and translate it as literally as I can :—

Ευχου δε σοι προ παντων φωτος ανοιχθηναι πυλας. ου γαρ συνοπτα ουδε συνηγοτα πασιν εστιν, ει μη τη Θεος δρ συνηναι και ο Χριστος αυτου.—*But pray that above all things the gates of light may be opened to you : for these (the Scriptures) are not clearly seen nor clearly understood by any, but by him to whom God and his Christ give (grace) to understand (them).*”

MISOPAPISTICUS.

POSTSCRIPT.—There are sentiments announced by Bishop *Kaye* in his “Account of the writings, &c. of Justin,” which require some notice, as they are entertained by not a few. In his first chapter, the Bishop speaks of the benefits of consulting the Fathers : and while on this

subject, he adduces in favour of what he advances, reasons which do not appear to be valid. A difference is said to exist between "human science," and "Revelation,"—the one being progressive, and the other not. The comparison is neither fairly nor justly made; the two things do not belong to the same class of ideas. The field or book of human science, which is nature, and the field or book of divine science, which is Revelation, are the two things that ought justly to be put in contrast; and both may be rightly said to be incapable of improvement. But human science and divine science are equally capable of being progressive: and what is true of the first is also true of the second,—that is, that it advances by "the labours of successive inquiries," and that the "crude notions of those who first engaged in the pursuit are discarded for more mature and more enlarged views." This has both reason and facts on its side. The very condition and circumstances of the Fathers, especially the first, forbid us to think that they had any very mature or enlarged knowledge of the wide field of Revelation. They were mostly illiterate, and their knowledge was very much confined to few of the main truths, similar to what the first scientific inquirers possessed. Facts confirm this view. Their writings shew that their knowledge of divine truths was far below what many have attained since their time. A methodist preacher of ordinary abilities in the present day, could write much better epistles than any of those left us by the apostolic Fathers,—epistles that would convey far more enlarged, more correct, and more scriptural views of divine truths, and much more free from fancies, puerilities, and extravagancies. This can be denied by no man whose judgment

is not warped by prejudice. The Bishop himself, there can be no doubt, possesses far correcter knowledge of Scripture than all the Fathers of the three first centuries; his very work on Justin is a proof of this. And his opinion as to the meaning of any difficult passage would be justly entitled to a higher regard than that of any of the first Fathers; yea, it might rightly be preferred, in many instances, to the universal consent of all the Fathers;—for their consent in many cases, is no more than an assent to what had been handed down from early times, not from the Apostles, but from their fanciful cotemporaries and nearest successors, environed by the vicious tests of Tertullian and Vincentius Lirinensis,—tests that would countenance and confirm; if rigidly and strictly applied, the traditions and errors of the Jews, as well as the traditions and errors of the Church of Rome,—and tests, which the very Pagans adopted to a considerable extent, in the first ages, to invalidate the claims of Christianity, as it is evident from the Octavius of Minutius Felix.

There is another sentence in his lordship's first chapter, which does not seem to be legitimately applied. "The greater," it is said, "the distance from the fountain-head, the greater the chance that the stream will be polluted." Had tradition been the source, and the only source, this would have been just in its application: but as the Scripture is the fountain-head, the application is by no means warrantable. We are now as near the fountain-head as the first Christians; for we have the Scripture, which contains substantially all that the apostles preached, and we have far greater facilities to draw clear water out of

this fountain than the Fathers had. The fountain-head was not so accessible to them as it is to us; as we have the advantage of the skill and knowledge of succeeding ages to assist us, and many of the disadvantages of the Fathers no longer exist. And yet it is strangely maintained, that their interpretation is purer and more correct than those of future ages, as if ignorance and scantiness of the means of information tended to throw more light on the pages of Revelation, than the knowledge and the enlarged inquiries of succeeding ages! How difficult it is to get rid of notions, however groundless, when long entertained and countenanced by great names!

It may not be improper to notice also here Justin's *Dialogue*, lately published in English as a part of the "Christian's Family Library," edited by the *Rev. Edw. Bickersteth*. It is a translation made by the *Rev. Henry Browne*, vicar of Nether Sewel, and published in 1745, and is, on the whole, as far as I can judge, a fair and impartial translation. But there is in the 80th section, a singular instance of undue leaning to one's own views, both in the translator and in the editor. The passage refers to the millennium. The translator's rendering tends to lessen the number of its advocates in Justin's time, and the editor's correction increases their number so much, as to include almost all the Christians of that age. The passage is the following:—

"I have already owned, that I and several others (*ἄλλοι πολλοί*) of the same way of thinking with myself, are fully persuaded that this will most assuredly come to pass. And again I told you, that there are (not) many good and pious Christians who do not believe it."

Justin's
Dialogue.

Millen-
nium.

Sect. 80.

The translator by rendering πολλοι, "several," instead of "many," clearly lessens the number of Millenarians: and the editor, by putting in the negative, "not," increases their number greatly. He refers to Mede, for one, as authorizing this alteration: but neither Mede nor any body else can reconcile it with the context. Would Justin have used "many" in the first instance, if he meant that *most* Christians held this opinion? Besides, what a strange sort of diction he employs by putting in two negatives, in the way that is done by this construction! Had he intended to convey the meaning imposed, as I conceive, upon him, the simple mode of stating it would be,—“I and *most* other Christians believe this: and there are but few, rightly-minded, who do not believe it.” But the word he employs with respect to both parties, is “many;” who, according to him, were pretty equally divided. The latter portion of the passage is as follows:—πολλους δ’ αὖ καὶ τῶν τῆς καθαρᾶς καὶ εὐσεβοῦς οὐτῶν Χριστιανῶν γνῶμης, τοῦτο μὴ γνωρίζειν ἐσημᾶνα σοι:—“And that many again, even of those who are Christians of a pure and pious mind, do not acknowledge this, I have signified to you.”

This is as literal a rendering perhaps as can well be made. How to introduce the negative, consistently with any propriety of language, it is difficult to see. Neither the original, any more than the English, can in this form admit of a negative with πολλους—many. It is only by changing the form of the sentence, that it has been practicable to put in the negative. When rendered, word for word, in its original form, the negative is scarcely, if at all, admissible, as it would make the expression very

strange;—“That not many do not acknowledge this!” Besides, the very question which elicited this answer, seems clearly to be against this proposed alteration. Tryphon asked Justin, whether he *really* believed that Jerusalem would be rebuilt, &c., or whether he avowed this for the sake of carrying a point in dispute. Now it is scarcely credible, that Tryphon, a learned Jew, as he has been represented, should be ignorant concerning this opinion, if it were almost universal, as this change in the sentence would make it! Nay, the very question, coming from a learned man, would lead us to think, that Justin in stating the number nearly equal on both sides, did exhibit the exaggeration of a partizan.

Tryphon,
his
question.

The conclusion of this section, 80, is so rendered, it is true, in this translation, as to favour this change in the sentence already quoted; but in my view, the rendering is not just. The original is this:—*Εγω δε, και ειτινες εισιν ορθογυμνονες καταπαντα Χριστιανοι, και σαρκος αναστασιν γενησεσθαι επισταμεθα και χιλια ετη εν Ιερουσαλημ οικοδομηθειςη και κοσμηθειςη και πλατυνθειςη, οι προφηται Ιεζεκιηλ και Ησαιας, και αλλοι ομολογουσιν.*—“But I, and if there are any Christians, orthodox in all things, do know, that there will be a resurrection even of the flesh: and that there will be a thousand years at Jerusalem, when built and adorned and enlarged, the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others, do confess.” That the resurrection of the flesh and the thousand years, are not connected, is apparent from a proper rendering of the passage, and also, from the commencement of the next section, which refers only to the millennium. The beginning of the section, and the next words to the above, are the following:—*Ουτως γαρ Ησαιας περι της χιλιοντα-*

ετηριδος ταυτης ειπεν.—“For thus Isaiah speaks of this term of a thousand years.” Then Isaiah lxv. 17, to the end, is given at large: and no reference is afterwards made to the resurrection.

See
Echard's
Eccl. Hist.
B. iii. ch. 1.

It appears rather remarkable that Justin should confine his opinions respecting the millennium, to those reputed orthodox: for it was held by some of the heretics, such as the Cerinthians and the Marcionites, in Justin's time, and afterwards by the Meletians, and the Apollinarians. It is not improbable that the adoption of it by some of the heretics, operated as one reason why in after-times it came to be denounced as heretical. The origin of the opinion was tradition, which is always very unsafe and uncertain; and it came from one who is represented by Eusebius and others, as a credulous man, and very weak in judgment. Such is the account given of *Papias*, who may be considered to be the very founder of the millennarian system. Whether the credulity of its first propagator and his weak judgment, have in a great measure characterized its advocates in all ages, I will not undertake to determine. That it borders too much in some respects on the Mahommedan paradise, cannot well be denied: nor can it be doubted, that it has been often associated, in many of its abettors, with sentiments very strange and heterodox, and marked with peculiar wildness and extravagance. These things are not of course sufficient of themselves to condemn it, but they go far to lessen its credit in the estimation of many: nor should they be left out in our calculation, when we weigh evidence on the subject.

VI.

IRENÆUS.

SIR,

The most important works in the second century, next to those of Justin Martyr, are the writings of Irenæus. What we have besides, except some fragmentary remains, are *Tatian's* speech against the Greeks (and he afterwards became a heretic)—*Athenagoras' Embassy* for the Christians, and a treatise on the resurrection,—and *Theophilus' three books or rather letters to Autolycus*; all which may be comprised in an octavo volume of 200 pages; and which contain nothing very interesting to us in the present day. They seem to have been written very much in the strain of Justin, and exhibit the same faults and defects.

Irenæus was by birth a Greek, and is supposed to have been born at Smyrna, and to have been instructed by Polycarp. That he knew Polycarp and heard him preach when he was young, is evident from a fragment of one of his letters to one Florinus. He was made Bishop of Lyons in France in the year 178, and about the year 187 he wrote his great work against the heretics in *five* books, addressed

Irenæus

On
Heresies.

to a friend. This work, accompanied by a few fragments from his other writings, has been often published. The best edition is considered to be that of Dr. *Grabe*, published at Oxford in the year 1702. Irenæus wrote in Greek; but the original has been lost; and what we have now is a Latin translation, supposed to have been made soon after the work was published. Some fragments of the original have been preserved by Eusebius, Epiphanius, and others, and are given by Dr. Grabe in his edition. It appears from these fragments that the style of Irenæus was not the best: and indeed he confesses in his preface that he was rude in speech, owing to his having lived so long among a people of a barbarous language. But his translator is still ruder; for his Latin is so barbarous that it is difficult often to make out the sense. Still the work itself is valuable on many accounts, and shews a mind of considerable vigour and capacity, and contains correct views of many important truths.

In the FIRST book he details with singular minuteness the strange vagaries of the numerous heretics of his day, and the various ways in which they turned and perverted Scripture to support their fantastic notions, contrary to its plain, obvious, and consistent meaning. Their attempts in this respect are very strikingly expressed; and as what he says may be a warning to others, I shall quote two passages:—

Lib. i.
cap. 1.

“ They attempt speciously to adapt (*αξιολπιστως προσαρμολζειν*) to what is spoken by them, either our Lord’s parables, or prophetic expressions, or apostolic words, that their system may not appear to be without evidence (*αμαρτυρον*), passing over the order (*ταξιν*) and context

(ειρμον) of the Scriptures, and as far as they can, loosening the members or limbs of truth (λυοντες τα μελη της αληθειας).”—“ Having patched together old women’s fables, then tearing from this and that place sayings, expressions, and parables, they endeavour to adapt to their fables, the words of God.”

He then refers to the known doctrines of the Church ; gives an epitome of them, which may be deemed to contain the rudiments of what is now called the Apostles Creed, and maintains that the acknowledged doctrines of the Universal Church give no countenance whatever to the strange notions of the heretics. I shall give this epitome whole and entire, that your readers may see what Irenæus considered in his day as the summary of Divine truth, and that they may understand to what his tradition refers. It forms the second chapter : —

“ The Church, though scattered through the whole world, to the extremities of the earth, hath yet received from the Apostles and their disciples, that faith which is in one God, Father Almighty, maker of heaven, and earth, and seas, and of all things in them : Cap. 2.

“ And in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, incarnated for our salvation :

“ And in the Holy Ghost, who through the prophets preached the economies, and the advents, and the generation from the Virgin, and the passion and the rising from the dead, and the incarnate ascension of our beloved Christ Jesus the Lord into the heavens, and his coming from the heavens in the glory of the Father, to sum up all things, and to raise up all the flesh of all mankind : that to Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and

King, according to the good pleasure of the invisible Father, every knee of those in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, may bow, and every tongue may confess to him; and that he may execute righteous judgment on them all:—that he may send into the eternal fire the spirits of wickedness (τα πνευματικά της πονηρίας), and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, and the ungodly, and the unjust, and the lawless and the calumniators of men; and that he may, graciously bestowing life, grant incorruption, and confer eternal glory on the righteous and the holy, who have kept his commandments, and have from the beginning or after repentance continued in his love."

Now Mr. *Newman*, one of the writers of the Oxford Tracts, according to what is reported, in his Lectures on "The Prophetic Office of the Church," would have us believe that what is called the Apostles' Creed came from the Apostles, at least substantially and nearly in the form we now have it. If there was such a creed in Irenæus' time, how came he not to use it, instead of forming one himself, as he appears evidently to have done,—at least in part? There was at that time no creed regularly formed: and what gave occasion to epitomes of this kind was the spread of the Gnostic errors; and it was on account of future errors that the creed acquired new accessions, until it had attained the form and fulness it now possesses. The creed itself is excellent; but it is a human composition, and as such our Church receives it. To palm it on the world as Divine, and as coming from the Apostles, is either the effect of ignorance or of strong delusion; or it is an attempt to foist in something else as Divine, besides the word of God, in order to introduce some other things.

What Irenæus says of this summary is, that the truths contained in it, were universally acknowledged and believed : I shall give his own words :—

“ This preaching and this faith, the Church having received, as we have said before, though scattered through the whole world, carefully preserves, as if it inhabited the same house : and it likewise believes these things, as if it had one soul and the same heart ; and it harmoniously preaches, and teaches, and delivers (*παραδιδωσιν*) these things, as if it possessed but one mouth. For though the dialects through the world are different, yet the substance of what is delivered (*δυναμεις της παραδοσεως*) is one and the same. And neither the Churches founded in Germany believe otherwise, or otherwise deliver (*παραδιδασιν*), nor those among the Iberians, or among the Celts, or in the eastern parts, or in Egypt, or in Lybia, nor those founded in the middle regions of the world ; but as the sun, the workmanship of God, is one and the same through the whole world ; so also the preaching of the truth shines everywhere, and enlightens all men who desire to come to the knowledge of the truth. And neither will the most powerful in speech of those who preside in the Churches speak things different from these (for no one is above the teacher), nor will the weak in speech lessen what is delivered (*την παραδοσιν*—the tradition) ; for faith being one and the same, neither he who can say much concerning it enlarges it (*επλεονασεν*), nor does he who says little make it less (*ηλαττονησε*). ”

The preceding passage has been given, that it might be seen what Irenæus meant by tradition. His tradition was evidently the truth conveyed by preaching ; and this

truth is mainly included in the summary which he had given. This had been *traditioned* or delivered to the Church by the Apostles, and it continued to be thus delivered and taught everywhere. The harmony, of which he speaks, was with respect to this summary of Divine truth: and this harmony still exists, notwithstanding differences on many other points, in all the Reformed or Protestant Churches, and in all Dissenting Churches, except those which are Socinianized. We may now say, as Irenæus did, that this preaching or this faith is "one and the same," that it is traditioned and taught by all Protestants deemed orthodox throughout the world. But this declaration of Irenæus has often been perverted in the same way as he tells that passages of Scripture were by the heretics. It has been separated from its "context," and been made to apply not only to *all* the doctrines of Scripture, but also to all matters of Church order and discipline. This is heretical work.

Vide
Appendix,
S.

In the SECOND book Irenæus proceeds formally to refute the fantasies of the heretics, shewing by argument and clear reasoning how inconsistent and absurd they were. His object, he says, was to "destroy and overturn what they falsely taught, by denuding and shewing what sort of things they were." They were, for the most part, things beyond the reach of human knowledge; and the notions they had of them were foolish and contradictory, or, in his own words, "incongruous, fatuitous, and irrational." Their opinions were indeed truly absurd. They were distinguished by the name of *Gnostics*—knowing men: but they held various sentiments, differing in many things from each other, but for the most part maintaining divers creations or emanations with respect to the Divine Being, making so many beings or

emanations to be within what they call the *Pleroma*, or fullness, and so many without it, and holding that the Creator of the world, the God of the Jews and the Saviour, were different beings or emanations, by various generations, from the Great parent of all. But they had many other strange opinions, many of which Irenæus notices and refutes, shewing their absurdity and inconsistency with the Scriptures: for they all, at least most of them, seemed to pay *some* regard to the Scriptures, and borrowed something from them to countenance their absurd notions. But Irenæus does not seem disposed on that account to take the Scriptures from them, as the Papists do with respect to the laity (and the men of the Oxford Tracts are rather jealous on this point,) but he encourages them to read the Scriptures, and directs them how to read them profitably.

While *Irenæus* very successfully disproves the fantasies of the heretics, he commits a few blunders himself. The heretics made a great deal of numbers, such as seven, ten, thirty, &c., as mentioned in the Bible, and existing in nature. To shew that this was all a vain thing, he brings forward many instances of *five* being a number applicable to many things. He says that each table of the law had five precepts, following in this instance the division of some of the Jewish rabbies;—that the cross had five points, two in the length, two in the breadth, and one in the middle;—that the veil of the holiest place had five pillars, while Moses only mentions four;—and that the altar of the burnt-offering was five cubits high, while it was only three.

But there are certain principles which are truly Protestant, avowed by Irenæus in this chapter. The heretics perverted the parables to their own purpose, by taking some parts, and

applying them to the support of their systems. How does Irenæus deal with them? Does he refer them to the teaching of the Church or to Catholic tradition? No: he pursues another course. He lays down a rule by which the parables might be correctly and safely explained. To shew this I make the following extracts:—

Lib. 2.
cap. 46.

“ Whatsoever things God has put within the power of man, and subjected to our knowledge—upon these things a mind that is sound, and safe, and godly, and truth-loving, will readily meditate; and he will make progress in them, acquiring to himself easy learning by daily exercise. And these are things which are obvious, and are openly, and as to diction, inambiguously, read in the Divine Scriptures: and therefore the parables ought not to be adapted to ambiguous points. For he who thus explains (that is, by the plain parts of Scripture), explains without danger, and the parables shall receive a similar explanation from all. But those things which are not plainly spoken, and are not obvious, it is folly to couple them with those explanations of the parables, which any one invents as he pleases: for thus the rule of truth (*regula veritatis*) will be with no one; but there will be as many truths opposing each other, and contradictory dogmas, as there will be expounders.—Because the parables are capable of many explanations, who of those who love the truth will not confess, that to affirm anything from them in the inquiry respecting God, and to leave what is certain, indubitable, and true, is the part of those who precipitate themselves into danger, and who are wholly irrational? ”

Vide
Appendix
T.

The principle of the analogy of faith is here clearly recognised. The “ rule of truth ” is to explain what is

obscure by what is clear and obvious, otherwise the result will be that there will be "truths" opposing each other. And we shall have presently another direction. The heretics introduced the discussion of many things manifestly beyond the reach of human knowledge, and started curious difficulties, and some of them arising from things said in Scripture, but which were such as could not be solved by man. Irenæus very justly and wisely answers them and says:—

"We ought to refer such things to God, our maker; very justly knowing, (rectissimè scientes) that the *Scriptures are indeed perfect* (Scripturæ quidem perfectæ sunt), because they have been dictated by the word of God and his Spirit. And in the degree in which we are less than, and farthest from, the word of God and his Spirit, in that degree we stand in need of the knowledge of his mysteries.—If some things in the works of creation be referred to God, and some come within our own knowledge, what hardship is it, if, of the things sought after in the Scriptures, the whole Scriptures being spiritual, we do, according to God's grace, explain some, and if some should be referred to God, not only in this present world, but also in that which is to come, that God may be always teaching, and man may be always learning of God?—If, therefore, according to what we have said, we refer some of the questions to God, we shall keep our faith and continue without danger; and the whole Scripture, given us by God, will be found by us consonant (συμφωνος), and the parables will harmonize with the things expressly said, and the things plainly said will explain (ἐπιλυσει) the parables."

Cap. 47.

We read nothing here of the teaching of the Church, or of tradition or of traditive interpretation; but of rules and

directions by which Scripture may be safely interpreted. Tradition is only applied by him to the general truths of the Gospel which continued to be preached in the Church. When he mentions expositions, and solutions of difficulties, he prescribes rules, and such as are suitable to all, not confining himself to authorized teachers, but recommending what he says indiscriminately to all, even to the heretics. The Scriptures he recognises as "perfect," and he recognises too the necessity of Divine grace in order to understand them aright. The explanation of what is capable of being explained, is said to be given "according to God's grace;" while, with due humility, what is insolvable, is referred to God. These are truly Protestant sentiments, and not less so is the following :—

Cap. 54. "For these (the heretics) are not more competent (that is, to teach the truth) than the Scriptures. Nor ought we to leave the words of the Lord, and Moses, and other prophets, and to believe these, who say nothing that is sane, but dote on unstable things (*instabila delirantibus*)."

Vide
Appendix,
U.

The application of this to the men of the Oxford Tracts is, in my view, perfectly warrantable. Many of the things they advocate are wholly "unstable" and uncertain, and even by no means sane or sound. What is their Catholic tradition, the teaching of the Church and the consent of Fathers, but things of this kind? They are "unstable" things, and what no spiritually-sane mind ought to receive, when not clearly sanctioned by the Divine Scriptures. The doting on "unstable things" is the character of heretics in every age. That these writers dote and say the most delirious things, on the points above mentioned, is quite evident from their writings.

The object of the THIRD book, as stated by himself, was to "bring proofs from the Scriptures." These proofs are chiefly from the *Gospels* and the *Acts* of the Apostles. He begins by stating how the Gospel came to them: and his words are remarkable; and were they adhered to, tradition would receive no more countenance in the world. They are these:—

"We have not known the method of our salvation through any but those through whom the Gospel has come to us; which indeed they first preached, but afterwards through the will of God *tradited* or delivered (*tradiderunt*) to us in the Scriptures, to be the foundation and pillar of our faith (*fundamentum et columnam fidei nostræ*)."

Lib. 3.
cap. 1.

Let us bear this in mind while reading Irenæus, and we shall not mistake what he says of tradition. The Apostles *tradited* or delivered the truth to the Church; and they *tradited* or delivered the same in writing. What was delivered and preached in his day, he declares to be the same as what the Apostles preached and delivered to writing. What the heretics maintained was the reverse of this, which he strenuously opposed. They held that the Apostles taught things *not* contained in the Scriptures; and some of them maintained that the Apostles themselves had not perfect knowledge. On this point he makes this declaration:—

"After our Lord arose from the dead, and they (the Apostles) were endued with the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon them from above, and were filled with all things, and had perfect knowledge, they went forth to the extremities of the earth, evangelizing those good things which are to us from God, and announcing celestial peace to men, all alike and each of them having the Gospel of God." (*Omnes pariter et singuli eorum habentes evangelium Dei.*)

Ibid.

There is in the second chapter a very singular passage, well deserving the attention of the men of the Oxford Tracts, as it shews whom they have as their companions in pleading for tradition. The *originators, advocates, and patrons of oral tradition* were the *heretics*; and it has never been resorted to nor pleaded in any age, except for the support of heretical and erroneous sentiments. The Jews quoted it, and the Papists quote it for the very purpose of maintaining what is foolish, superstitious, or unscriptural. The passage is this:—

Cap. 2

Vide
Appendix,
X.

“When they (the heretics) are reproved from the Scriptures, they turn to find fault with the Scriptures, as if they were not right, or were not of authority, both because they are variously expressed (*variè dictæ*), and because the truth cannot be found from them by those who are ignorant of tradition: for that was not delivered by means of writing, but by word of mouth (*per vivam vocem*).”

To meet this objection, and to take the heretics, as it were, on their own ground, Irenæus proceeds to shew *where* that tradition, if there was any, could reasonably be found. He justly infers, that if there was anything orally delivered and not committed to writing, it must have been left to those whom the Apostles appointed to succeed them. He then begins at Rome, and traces the succession of bishops or presbyters up to the Apostles, and maintains that the tradition or delivery of the truth had continued the same from the first: and thus he completely shuts out oral tradition. Then he goes to Asia, and mentions Polycarp, and says that he taught the same things as he learnt from the Apostles, and refers to his epistle as a proof, they being clearly the truths of the Gospel which the Apostles preached and

delivered to writing. He afterwards refers to the Church universally in these words :—

“ When, therefore, the proofs are so many, we ought not to seek the truth from some, when it is easy to take it from the Church, since the Apostles had most plentifully poured into it, as into a rich depository, *all things which belong to the truth*, that every one who wishes may take from it the drink of life.”

Cap. 4.

Let what he said before be connected with this, that is, that what the Apostles preached they delivered to us in the Scriptures, and there will be the strongest evidence against any oral tradition, independent of Scripture. They “poured,” he says, “into the Church *all things* belonging to the truth :” and what they thus poured, or what they preached, they delivered to us in the Scriptures. This must have been his meaning, otherwise there would have been a gap to escape for the heretics, who maintained that the Apostles left some things for an oral delivery. The very question he afterwards puts confirms this view :—“ What if the Apostles,” he says, “ had not left the Scriptures to us, would it not be our duty to follow the order of tradition which they delivered to those to whom they committed the Churches ? ” He, throughout, identifies their writings with what they delivered to the Churches, and admits of nothing else as tradition. This is what no one who reads him impartially can deny. But Romanists and others have often perverted what he says to support their own views. His very argument necessarily excludes oral tradition, as containing anything different from the truths of the Scriptures. The object of all he advances is, to show the plea of heretics for oral tradition to be wholly groundless. What does he say in

Vide
Appendix,
Y.

Cap. 4.

his preface that he was going to do? To bring proofs from the Scriptures. And in order to make those proofs to bear on them, he begins by nullifying the validity of any oral tradition, independent of the Scriptures, maintaining that what the Apostles preached they committed to writing, and that what they preached continued to be the tradition of the Church in his day. Having cleared his ground, he proceeds to execute the work which he announced in his preface.

The scriptural proofs he adduces are numerous, and are on the whole appropriate, and sufficiently strong against the heretics. But he states now and then some singular things which appear to us now even ridiculous. He holds that there could not have been less or more than *four* Gospels. "Since there are," he says, "four regions of the world in which we are, and four general winds, and the Church is dispersed through all the earth, and the pillar (στυλος) and stay (στηριγμα) of the Church is the Gospel and spirit of life, it is fit that it should have *four* pillars, everywhere breathing incorruption and revivifying men (πνεύματα την αβθαρσίαν και αναζωπυρουντας τους ανθρωπους.)" Though the reasons given are fanciful, yet there is in this sentence an acknowledgment of a truth which the men of the Oxford Tracts would, as I expect, hardly concede,—the Church having the four Gospels as pillars. But there is an important sense in which this is true, as well as the Apostle's declaration, that the Church is the ground and pillar of the truth. There is a mutual support. The Church is first built on the Gospel, the foundation laid by the Apostles and Prophets; and then the Gospel is spread and sustained by the Church. He finds a reason also for the four Gospels from the four covenants made with mankind—with Adam, Noah, Moses, and Christ. He makes a false comment on

the expression in Psalm cxxxii. 11, "Of the fruit of thy body," making it different from "the fruit of thy loins," the very word used when quoted in Acts ii. 30; and this he states as a proof that Christ was to be born of a virgin, and not according to the common course of nature. The stone, mentioned by Daniel, "cut out without hands," was a pre-signification of the same supernatural generation. The rod of Moses becoming a living serpent was an intended symbol of Christ. He strongly maintains the salvation of Adam, as necessary to vindicate the power of God over the enemy; and Feuardentius tells us in his notes, that it was a general opinion of the Fathers, that Adam, after undergoing many trials, toils, and calamities, came at last to Mount Calvary, died there, and was buried where Christ was crucified. And the same author says, that many of the Fathers agreed with Irenæus in most of the foregoing notions. So much the worse for their judgment and discretion.

In the FOURTH book, Irenæus adduces against the heretics the sayings or sermons of our Lord (*Domini sermones*), though he does not confine himself to them. While he brings forward what clearly proves that God is one and the same, and that there is only one God, being Father, Son, and Spirit, the Creator of the world, the God of the Jews and the God of Christians, he takes the opportunity of obviating the various frivolous objections of the heretics: and this leads him to notice a great number of subjects; some of which he handles wisely and scripturally; but there are others on which his remarks are singular and fanciful. I adduce the following as instances: Quoting John's saying—"God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham," he remarks, "This Jesus did by

Liber iv.

Vide
Appendix,
Z.

drawing us from the religion of stones." He applies saying of Isaiah, i. 22, to the Jewish elders. "Isaiah says," he observes, "Thy vintners mix wine with water (the Septuagint version) " showing that the elders who mix *watery* tradition (*aquatam traditionem*) with the strict precept of God."—Jacob laying hold of Esau's heel, the striving and conquering, was a type of Christ.—Esau selling, and Jacob obtaining the birthright, symbolized the case of the Jews and Gentiles.—Jacob begetting his twelve sons, the twelve tribes, in a foreign land, betokened that "Christ should begin in a foreign country to generate the twelve-pillared foundation of the Church" (*duodecylum firmamentum Ecclesiæ*).—The variegated sheep Jacob represented the various nations that believed.—Peter labouring more than the other Apostles, was, because he had more to do to teach the Gentiles, than the others did in teaching the Jews.—Lot's incest is represented as excusable, as well as the conduct of his daughters, and they are made symbolical of what I do not choose to repeat after him. Many similar things might be mentioned. But on almost all these and the like strange things, Ferdinandus, the Popish annotator, tells us, that there is a consent of the Fathers; as if the consent of the Fathers could convert folly into wisdom, and nonsense into sense, and transmute vagaries and Rabbinical fictions into solid Christian verities. And these are the men who are taken almost the infallible expounders of Scripture, and whom Oxford divines quote, and whose opinions they seek to regard as if they were the dictates of Divine wisdom.

Notwithstanding these blemishes, there are many passages in this book that are truly valuable. The same is

appears throughout it as in the preceding, that is, that the tradition of the Church is the same with the tradition of Scripture; and, like Justin, he recognises the principle of the Bible Society, that the Scriptures are and ought to be read by all. This is what he says to the heretics:—

“ Read more diligently that *Gospel* which is given us by the Apostles, and read more diligently the *prophets*, and you will find every act and *every doctrine* (omnem doctrinam), and the whole passion of our Lord related in them.” Cap. 66.

Could he have said this, were any thing more to be learned from tradition? Here is “every doctrine,” and what more was wanted? Had he allowed any thing more, his attempt to convince them from Scripture must have been useless; for they might have again told him, “These are imperfect, there is another channel, there is oral tradition.” No: he says, “every doctrine” is here.—For the benefit of those who plead for orders as “the only external mark,” what Irenæus says respecting “unjust presbyters,” shall be quoted:—

“ There are those who are believed by many to be presbyters; but they serve their own lusts, and set not the fear of God in their hearts, but treat others with reproaches, and are elated by the pride of the principal station. From all such we ought to stand aloof (absistere—to depart), but to adhere to those who keep, as we have said before, the *doctrine* of the Apostles, and *with* the order of the Presbytery (presbyterii ordine) blamelessly exhibit *sound speech* and *conversation* for the instruction and correction of others.” Cap. 44.

Vide
Appendix,
A a.

One more passage I shall set down from this book, and that for the sake of the traditionists. What he says of the

Jewish traditions, is true of almost all traditions. His expressions are these :—

Cap. 25. “The tradition of their elders, which they pretend to observe according to the law, is contrary to the law, which was given by Moses : by which (tradition) they *take away* some things, and *add* some things, and some things they interpret as they wish.”

Liber v. In the FIFTH and last book, the same subject is pursued, and the proofs are mostly taken from the *Apostolic Epistles*. The real incarnation of Christ, and the resurrection of the flesh, are in the former part discussed and proved. The character of Antichrist is then described : and the last subject is the Millennial question. Both Irenæus and Justin were Millenarians, holding the temporal reign of Christ. What is advanced on the two first subjects is for the most part suitable, though mixed with what is extraneous and fanciful. What he says on the Millennium shows, that our modern Millenarians have not originated their particular views, nor adduced much that is new in favour of them.

Added to these five books are a few fragments, collected from succeeding authors, by whom they were quoted from writings of his, now lost. They contain nothing of much interest, except a part of a letter to one Florinus, in which there is a mention made of Polycarp. He says, that he well remembered “how Polycarp, having received what he preached from eyewitnesses of the word of life, declared all things consonant with the Scriptures (*κατὰ συμφωνίαν ταῖς γραφαῖς*).”

The mistakes and defects of Irenæus are nearly the same with those of Justin. His views respecting the effects of

the fall appear defective; the corruption rather than the fault of man is set forth and dwelt upon, or sin as a depravity rather as an offence against God. Consequently his notions of justification, as distinct from sanctification, are not very clear. Like Justin, too, he finds prophecies where none really exist, and carries the symbolizing scheme to an extent that is often quite absurd, even beyond what scarcely any modern fanatics have done.

There is perhaps no author who has given so much *occasion* to the plea for oral tradition as Irenæus; and there is none, I conceive, when he is rightly understood, who has done more to nullify such a plea. To convince us of this, we have only to consider the design of his writings, and the way in which he executed it. In his *first* book he describes the strange notions of the heretics, and asserts them to be inconsistent with the general belief of the Church. In his *second*, he exhibits the inconsistency of their notions with each other, and with reason and common sense. And then in the *three* following books he brings forward the Scriptures against them; and the introduction of tradition in the beginning of the third book was made for the purpose of preventing the heretics from evading the proofs from the Scriptures, which they attempted to do by pleading oral tradition. This was what he was driven to by them, and was not the ground which he had chosen, and on which he designed to carry on the contest. His ground was Scripture; and on that he fights mostly throughout. The very declaration, that what the Apostles preached they committed to writing, to be "the foundation and pillar of our faith," proves most clearly, that he considered tradition and what they wrote to be the same. It

is by overlooking this declaration and wholly mistaking the main drift of his argument, that what he says can be at all construed favourably to oral tradition. How could he possibly favour what he blames in the heretics, and what he manifestly labours to disprove? He most explicitly, in several places, rejects entirely the idea of anything being secretly taught by the Apostles, or taught to a few, which the heretics vainly pretended, and declares that what they taught they taught to all without distinction, having "poured," he says, "into the Church all things belonging to the truth."

But I must state, that, contrary to his usual practice, he has mentioned one or two things himself on the ground of oral tradition, though not on that ground only; and strange to say, in both instances his tradition is confessedly and palpably false. He occasionally indeed refers to the testimony of some unnamed presbyter on some other points; but the two subjects that I am going to mention are the most prominent and mostly dwelt upon. The one is respecting the Millennium. He reports a certain declaration as having been made by our Lord, and related by John the disciple to some elders, from whom he seems to have received it. "Elders," he says, "who had seen John, the Lord's disciple, have mentioned, that they had heard from him, how the Lord taught concerning these times and said, *The days shall come, in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand branches, and on each branch ten thousand shoots, and on each shoot ten thousand clusters, and on each cluster ten thousand grapes; and each grape, when pressed, shall yield twenty-five kilderkins (metretas—twelve gallons) of wine. And when any one shall lay*

hold on any of these holy clusters, another will cry, I am a better cluster, take me, by me bless the Lord." The extravagance of this was too much to gain the consent of the Fathers : and Feuardentius, the strenuous defender of all their follies, gives up this folly as a fiction, originally drawn out of the abundant stock of Rabbinical fables.—The other oral tradition is respecting the age of our Saviour. He maintains that it was necessary that Christ should be of every age, that he might save those of every age, that is, that he should be an infant, that he might save infants—a child, a youth, a grown-up man, and an old man, that he might save persons of all these ages. "All the elders," he says, "who were conversant with John, the Lord's disciple in Asia, testify, that John delivered this very thing to them." He tells us also that the Gospel bears the same witness. This he makes out by what the Jews said to our Saviour, "Thou art not yet fifty years old;" he hence concludes, that he must have been then *near* that age. So that he brings his reason, oral tradition, and Scripture, in support of his views ; and in all these respects manifesting a weakness not very uncommon to many of the primitive Fathers.

Lib. v.
Cap. 33.

Lib. ii.
Cap. 39.

Lib. ii.
Cap. 40.

As to traditive interpretations derived from the Apostles, we have no traces of them in Irenæus any more than in Justin. Both expound and explain the Scriptures, reason upon them, and draw their inferences, in a way similar to what Protestants do, without giving the least hint that they had received any traditionary interpretations. And if there were such things, from whom could we expect them, if not from these authors, who lived in the next age to the Apostles, and who were both acquainted with the

eastern as well as with the western Churches? And we look in vain to these authors for any oral traditions (except in the instances named as to Irenæus, and these are false), independent of the Scriptures, left to the Church by the Apostles. How vain and groundless therefore is the apparent lament of Mr. Newman in his Lectures, when he speaks of "rich, uncatalogued treasures of a traditionary nature!" It is the mere effect of a vagrant and deluded imagination. For if they were "uncatalogued," we might surely expect some references made to them, they being so "rich" and valuable! too rich and "too sacred or too subtle," it seems, "to be recorded in words!!" How pitiaibly superstitious is this! and how lamentably credulous must such a mind be as to Popish tales! for he could not find such a thought anywhere else.

With respect to oral tradition and traditive interpretation, we have no need of either. The Scriptures contain all the essential truths which the Apostles preached; and as to interpretation, we have only to follow such rules as Irenæus and others have specified, for neglect of which the heretics entangled themselves in their errors. Let us observe the order and context of Scripture, and explain things difficult by what is plain, and refer to God what we cannot thus explain. And let us add the rule mentioned by Justin, which is *prayer*: and we shall do far better than by following any decrees of council, consent of Fathers, or any such varying thing as the teaching of the Church, or Catholic tradition. The plain and certain truth is, that for all *necessary* purposes the Scriptures are wholly sufficient. But if we want to establish what is erroneous, superstitious, or pontifical, we must have recourse to the Fathers and

Catholic tradition. If we want to propagate the error, that baptism is an *opus operatum*, or something very near to it, as is done by the men of the Oxford Tracts, we *must* have tradition, decrees of councils, and consent of Fathers; and, like the heretics, we must "patch up" something from these resources, and "adapt" to our fable some words of Scripture, "passing over," as Irenæus says, "the order and context of the Scriptures;" and we shall thus effect our purpose. If we want to establish the Popish doctrine, or something akin to it, respecting the Lord's Supper, we have only to proceed in the same way, and we shall succeed in deluding our fellow-creatures, as the men of the Oxford Tracts do in too many instances. If, again, we wish to make orders "the only external mark of a Christian minister," and establish a priesthood similar to the Levitical, or rather a Romish priesthood, on an exclusive and monopolizing principle, we must have recourse to Catholic tradition and consent of Fathers, and say with the heretics, that the "Scriptures are not perfect," and cannot be fully understood without tradition; and we shall produce a vast show of evidence in our favour, especially if we imitate the practice of the heretics in "speciously adapting" to our scheme some "apostolic words." If any of these or similar things be our objects, we must have Catholic tradition, consent of fathers, and many such strange, false, and useless authorities.

On the other hand, if we desire to know the truth of God, to understand the will of the Highest, to be acquainted with the way which God in his mercy and wisdom has contrived to save sinners, or in other words, to possess all that is really needful for conversion, edification, and

salvation, we want no more than the Scriptures, accompanied with such ordinary helps, as means, as are usually employed, and especially with prayer, that "the gates of light," as the venerable old man said to Justin Martyr, "may be opened to us." The Scriptures, and the Scriptures *alone*, conveyed in their own words, or in the words of faithful expounders, are able to make us truly wise—wise for that purpose for which they have been expressly, and, I may say, exclusively given, that is, "wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus," so "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

MISOPAPISTICUS.

POSTSCRIPT.—Subjoined are a few interesting passages from Irenæus on various subjects:—

Lib. i.
Cap. 1.

"He who will reduce each particular of what is said to its own order, and fit it to the body of truth, will denude their system, and shew it to be baseless."

Lib. i.
Cap. 30.

"Those, called continent, (the followers of Marcion the heretic, and others,) preach celibacy, (*αγαμια*,—unmarriedness) rendering void the ancient formation of God, and indirectly blaming him who made male and female for the procreation of men; and they introduce abstinence from those things called by us animals, being unthankful to God who made all things." We have here two heretical sentiments, which were afterwards in a great measure adopted by the infallible Church of Rome.

"The Father of all is far distant from those affections and passions which belong to men, being both simple and uncompounded, homogeneous, and all like himself and

equal ; for he is all mind and all spirit, and all perception and all understanding, and all reason, and all hearing, and all eye, and all light, and the whole fountain of all good. After this manner it is usual for the religious and pious to speak of God. But he is above all these things, and for these things, ineffable. For he is well and rightly called mind, comprehending all things ; but it is not like the mind of men : and he is most justly called light ; but it is nothing like that light which is in us."

Lib. ii.
Cap. 16.

"It is better not to know any thing, not even a single cause of any of the things that are made, and to believe God and persevere in love, than to be inflated with such knowledge, and to fall away from love, which vivifies men : and it is better not to enquire after any thing else as to knowledge, save Jesus Christ the Son of God, who was crucified for us, than, through abstruse questions and subtle prating, to fall into impiety."

Lib. ii.
Cap. 45.

"Language, being carnal, is not adequate to serve the velocity of man's thought, it being spiritual : hence our word is suppressed within, and is not brought forth at once, as it is conceived by the mind, but by parts, according to what language is able to supply."

Lib. ii.
Cap. 47.

"That eternal fire is prepared for transgressors, our Lord hath clearly declared, and other scriptures demonstrate. And that God foreknew that this would be, the Scriptures in like manner demonstrate, inasmuch as he has prepared from the beginning eternal fire for those that would transgress. But the very cause of the nature of the transgressors (*ipsam causam naturæ transgredientium*) neither has any scriptnre related, nor has an apostle declared, nor has the Lord taught. We ought therefore to leave this knowledge with God."

Lib. ii.
Cap. 49.

Lib. ii.
Cap. 55. "He who formed man, who planted paradise, who built the world, who brought the deluge, who saved Noah,—the same is the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, the God of the living; whom the law announces, whom the prophets proclaim, whom Christ reveals, whom the Apostles teach, whom the Church believes."

Lib. iii.
Pref. "The love which is in God, being rich and bounteous, grants more than any one asks of it."

Lib. iii.
Cap. 12. "These are the words of the Church, (after quoting Acts iv. 24—30), from which every church has had its beginning; these are the words of the metropolis of the citizens of the new covenant, (*αὗται φωναὶ τῆς μητροπόλεως τῶν τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης πολιτῶν*); these are the words of the Apostles, these are the words of the Lord's disciples, who were truly perfect, having been perfected (that is, in knowledge,) after our Lord's ascension, by the Spirit."

Lib. iii.
Cap. 12. "We having laboured with these proofs from the Scriptures, and announcing briefly and compendiously what is spoken at large, do thou attend to them with patience, and think it not prolixity, knowing this, that the proofs which are in the Scriptures cannot be shewn, except from the Scriptures themselves. (*Ostensione quæ sunt in Scripturis non possunt ostendi, nisi ex ipsis scripturis.*")

"If any one yields himself easily, as a little sheep, to them (the heretics) and has obtained their redemption, such an one becomes inflated, and thinks himself to be neither in heaven nor on earth, but to have entered within the pleroma, and to be embracing now his own angel; he walks struttingly and superciliously, having the elation

of a dunghill cock. There are some among them, who say, that the man who comes from above ought to attain good conduct; on this account they counterfeit gravity by some sort of a stately look.” Lib. iii. Cap. 19.

“ Our Lord promised to send the Paraclete to fit us for God. For as one mass cannot without moisture be made from dry corn, nor one bread; so we, who are many, cannot be made one in Christ Jesus without the water which is from heaven. And as the dry earth, if it receives no moisture, does not fructify; so we also, being at first like dry wood, could never fructify into life, without the voluntary supernal rain. (Sine superna voluntaria pluvia.)” Lib. iii. Cap. 19.

“ Though they (the heretics) speak similar things with the faithful, they yet relish things not only dissimilar, but even contrary, and altogether full of blasphemies, by which they destroy those, who through similarity of words draw in their poison, which is in nature dissimilar: as any one, giving *gypsum* mixed with water, seduces by similarity of colour; according to what a certain person, superior to us, has said respecting all who in any way deprave the things which are of God, and adulterate God’s truth,— “ *Gypsum* is wickedly mixed with milk.” In what measure this applies to the divines of the Oxford Tracts, the reader will be able to judge when he peruses with attention their writings. There is a large quantity of *gypsum*, I have no doubt, to be found mixed up in them. Lib. iii. Cap. 19.

“ It was necessary that the Mediator between God and men, should through his own relationship, (οικειοτης, domesticity,) to each, bring together both into friendship and unanimity, (ομονοια,) and present man to God, and make known God to men.” Lib. iii. Cap. 20.

“The preaching of the church is everywhere steady and equally perseverant, and has testimony from the prophets, and from the apostles, and from all the disciples. This gift of God, (that is, the Holy Spirit,) is committed to the Church, as breathing to the human frame, for this end, that all the members, receiving it, might be vivified; yea, in it is deposited the communication of Christ, that is, the Holy Spirit, the earnest of incorruption, and confirmation of our faith, and the ladder of ascension to God. For “in the church,” he says, “God has set Apostles, prophets, teachers,” and every other operation of the Spirit: of which they are not all partakers, who resort not to the church, but deprive themselves of life through a wicked opinion and the worst operation. For where the church is, there is the spirit of God; and *where the Spirit of God is, there is the church*, and every grace; and the Spirit is truth. Therefore they who do not partake of Him, are neither nourished by the mother’s breasts, nor participate of that clearest fountain which proceeds from the body of Christ: but they dig for themselves broken cisterns out of earthly ditches, and drink putrid water from miry places, shunning the faith of the church, lest they should be converted, and rejecting the Spirit, that they may not be instructed.” No portion of this is objectionable, if properly understood, and viewed according to the state of things at *that* time. The preaching of the Church was *then* consistent, and the same as to all the points in dispute with the heretics. The Spirit of God and the Church, are doubtless invariably connected; for there is no true Church where the Holy Spirit does not exert and manifest his influence. But there have been

Lib. iii.
Cap. 40.

and there are no doubt, many churches, or those called churches, where the Spirit of God does not reside. What was the primitive Church when filled with Arianism? And what is the present state of the Church of Rome? It cannot surely be said of either, "That where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God," except we ascribe to him the works of the spirit of darkness. Something besides "succession" is necessary to preserve the apostolical character of a Church. That the main truths were *then* held by the Church, and *not* by the heretics, was no doubt a fact. What is said of those who left it was therefore true.

"He who wishes to convert them (the heretics,) ought to seek diligently to know their principles and arguments. For it is not possible for any one to cure those who are ill, who knows not what their illness is."

Lib. iv.
Prefatio.

"Man, being rational, and in this like God, having been made free in will and to be of his own power, is to himself the cause, that he should become sometimes wheat, and sometimes chaff. He will therefore be even justly condemned, because, having been made rational, he has lost genuine reason, and living irrationally, has become adverse to the justice of God, delivering himself up to every terrene spirit, and serving all kinds of lusts."

Lib. iv.
cap. 9.

"Because it was impossible without God to know God, he (Christ,) teaches men to know God by his own word."

Lib. iv.
cap. 10.

"Christ received testimony, that he is truly man, and that he is truly God, from all—from the Father—from the Spirit and from angels—from his own condition—from men and from apostate spirits—from seductors and from the enemy—and lastly, from death itself. And the Son,

Lib. iv.
cap. 14.

administering to the Father, performs all things from the beginning even to the end ; and without him no one can know God."

Lib. iv.
cap. 34.

"Sacrifices do not sanctify a man, for God has no need of sacrifice : but his conscience, who offers, being pure, sanctifies the sacrifice."

Lib. iv.
cap. 37.

"As they who see the light, are in the light, and partake of its brightness ; so they who see God, are in God, and partake of his brightness : and the brightness vivifies them. They therefore possess life, who see God. And on this account the incomprehensible and the inconceivable and the unseen, makes himself to be seen, and conceived, and comprehended by the faithful ; that he might vivify those who comprehend and see Him through faith. For as his greatness is untraceable, so his goodness is unutterable ; through which being seen, He grants life to those who see Him. Since to live without life is not possible, the support of life proceeds from a participation of God : and the participation of God is to know God and to enjoy his goodness !"

Ibid.

"The glory of God is living man, and the life of man is the vision of God."

Lib. iv.
cap. 43.

"Every prophecy, before the event, is an enigma and a contradiction (*αντιλογια*) to men. When the time comes and what is prophesied takes place, then it obtains the exactest explanation, (*ακριβεστατης εξηγησεως*)."

"On those who believe not, but despise him, God brings blindness, as the sun, his workmanship, does on those who, for some infirmity of the eyes, cannot look much on the light ; but to those who believe him and

follow him, he grants a fuller and a greater illumination of mind."

Lib. iv.
cap. 48.

"If God therefore, the foreknower of all things, has even now delivered up as many as he knew would not believe, to their own infidelity, and has turned away his face from such, leaving them in the darkness which they have chosen for themselves; what wonder is it, if even then he delivered up Pharaoh, who would not believe, together with those who were with him, to their own infidelity?" Whether this view consists with Scripture and reason, may possibly be doubted by some.

Ibid.

"Every word (*omnis sermo*) will appear to him, who may read the Scripture diligently, to be with those who are Presbyters in the Church, with whom is the apostolical doctrine." This is wholly to identify the Church doctrine with the Scripture.

Lib. iv.
cap. 52.

"True knowledge is the doctrine of the Apostles: and the ancient constitution (*συνήθεια*, system) of the Church, even the character of the body of Christ, is according to the successions of Bishops, to whom they delivered the Church which is in every place; (in which) there is the fullest handling (*tractatio plenissima*) of the Scriptures, having reached us, being preserved without fiction, receiving neither addition nor diminution (*neque additamentum neque ablationem recipiens*),—and the reading without falsification,—and the legitimate and diligent exposition according to the Scriptures (*secundum Scripturas expositio legitima et diligens*) without danger and without blasphemy,—and the chief gift of love, which is more precious than knowledge, more glorious than prophecy, and far more eminent than all other gifts." Here we have "the fullest

Lib. iv.
cap. 63.

handling of the Scriptures," without any "addition or diminution," and a "legitimate exposition," not according to tradition, but "according to the Scriptures."

Lib. iv.
cap. 69. "We, following the one and only true God as our teacher, and having his words as the rule of truth, (*regulam veritatis habentes ejus sermones*) we all do say the same things on the same subjects."

Lib. v.
cap. 9. "As many as fear God, and believe in the advent of his Son, and set by faith the Spirit of God in their hearts, these may be justly said to be such men (that is, as have the Spirit,) being both clean, and spiritual, and living to God; because they have the Spirit of the Father, who cleanses man, and elevates him to the life of God."

Ibid. "Since without God's Spirit we cannot be saved, the apostle exhorts us to preserve by faith and holy conversation, the Spirit of God, lest being destitute of the Holy Spirit, we should lose the kingdom of heaven."

Frag. Ser.
de Fide. "The will of the intelligent soul is the reason that is within us, as a power having authority over itself. The will is a desiderative mind, and an intellectual desire, assenting to what is desired,—*θελησις εστι νους ορεκτικος, και διανοητικη ορεξις, προς το θεληθεν επινεουσα.*"

VII.

BAPTISM.

February 22, 1838.

Τους κατα αληθειαν ευσεβεις και φιλοσοφους μονον τἀληθες τιμᾶν και στεργειν ο λογος υπαγορευει, παραιτουμενους δοξαις παλαιων εξακολουθειν ἂν φαυλαι ωσιν.—“ Reason prescribes, that the godly according to truth, and philosophers, should value and love only what is true, *declining to follow the opinions of the ancients*, if they be worthless.”—Justin Martyr.

Apol. i.
sect. 2.

SIR,

I have now completed my review of the Fathers of the *two* first centuries, at least of the principal Fathers, there being none else whose works are of any importance, especially on the subjects which I propose to discuss, that is, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. I have also examined the works and fragmentary remains of those I have not expressly reviewed, and I find nothing in them on these subjects additional to what the Fathers I have reviewed contain. My present subject is *Baptism*.

Neither Clement, nor Polycarp, nor Ignatius, contain any thing very particular on this point. In Clement's first, and best, and longest epistle, I find no reference to Baptism. In his second, he calls Baptism a "seal," which he exhorts us to keep "without spot." In Polycarp, there is no mention of Baptism. Ignatius, in his seven epistles, very slightly refers to it but in three places, and that in no way favourable to the erroneous views of after-ages. All these men seem to have acted in this instance somewhat like the apostles in their writings, who have said comparatively but little either on Baptism or on the Lord's Supper, other things having been deemed of much greater importance. These being outward signs and seals, they attended mostly to what these signified and sealed. They would have doubtless done otherwise, had they viewed them in the same light with the Oxford Divines.

But when we come to the wild, incoherent, and cabalistic effusions of Barnabas, or to the almost insane and fatuitous extravagances of Hermas, we meet with what is very fanciful, whimsical and exaggerated. What follows from Barnabas's epistle, is of this kind. It is, as will be seen, an interpretation of prophecy, and not an apostolic tradition; an interpretation the strangest that can well be conceived. "Let us now inquire whether the Lord took care to manifest anything beforehand concerning *water* and the *cross*. Now for the former of these, it is written to the people of Israel, how they shall not receive that Baptism which brings to forgiveness of sins; but shall institute another to themselves that cannot. For thus saith the Prophet: *Be astonished, O heaven, and let the earth tremble at it, because this people have done two great and wicked things; they have left me,*

the fountain of living waters, and have digged for themselves broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Then he quotes portions of Isaiah xvi. 1, 2; xlv. 2; xxxiii. 16, 17, and proceeds thus:—"And again he saith in another Prophet, He that doeth these things, *shall be like a tree, planted by the currents of water, which shall give its fruit in its season, &c.* And then he goes on to the end of the Psalm, and appends these observations, but how they apply I cannot understand:—"Consider how he has joined both the *cross* and the *water* together. For this he saith; Blessed are they who, putting their trust in the cross, descend into the water; for they shall have their reward in due time: then, saith he, will I give it them." How inapplicable and incoherent is the whole! After a few lines, he proceeds thus:—"In like manner does another Prophet speak; *The land of Jacob was the praise of all the earth, magnifying thereby the vessel of His Spirit: and what follows? And there was a river running on the right hand, and beautiful trees grew by it; and he that shall eat of them shall live for ever.* The signification of which is this,—That we go down into the water full of sins and pollutions; but come up again bringing forth fruit; having in our hearts the fear and hope which is in Jesus, by the Spirit." On such authorities as these do the divines of the Oxford Tracts build their system! If they are men of wisdom, they should not go to folly for support.

As to *Hermas*, he fairly outdoes these divines. They have yet to make some progress before they come up to him; for he is yet some degrees before them. "I asked her," he says, "*Lady*, why is the tower (the Church) built upon the water? She replied, I said before to thee, that thou wert very wise, to inquire diligently concerning the building; therefore, thou

Hermas.

shalt find the truth. Hear, therefore, why the tower is built upon the water; because your life is and shall be saved by water." Thus the foundation of the Church is water! and not that laid by the apostles and prophets. In the quotation which I have already given in a former letter, he makes the ancient saints, those under the Old Testament, to partake of Baptism in their departed state. How disembodied spirits could be baptized with material water, is a question which, perhaps, never occurred to him. However, the only term he gives to Baptism is "seal," in which he is not wrong; only he connects a wrong idea with it, making it a sort of *mark*, instead of a confirmatory emblem.

Justin. Relieving myself and my readers from these reveries, I shall proceed to the works of *Justin Martyr*. The account he gives of Baptism is very full, and on the whole satisfactory. The following extracts from his *first* Apology, contain, substantially, every thing he has said on the subject;—

"And how we dedicate ourselves to God, having been made new (*καινοποιηθεντες*) by Christ, we shall also explain, lest by leaving out this, we should seem to do any thing amiss in the narrative. Whosoever are persuaded and believe that those things taught and spoken by us are true, and undertake to be able so to live, are taught to pray, and to ask, while fasting, of God, the remission of past sins, we at the same time praying and fasting with them. Then, they are led by us where water is, and according to the regeneration by which we ourselves have been regenerated, they are regenerated: for, in the name of the Father of the universe and Lord God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then undergo the washing which is by water (*το εν τω υδατι τότε λουτρον ποιουνται*): for Christ has said, *Except ye*

be regenerated (αναγεννηθητε) ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.—Since, being ignorant of our first generation, we were born from necessity, and were brought up in evil customs and wicked practices, that we may not continue the children of necessity and of ignorance, but that being those of choice and knowledge, we may obtain by water the remission of the sins which we have before committed, the name of the Father of the universe and Lord God, is called over him who chooses (τω ελομενω) to be regenerated, and who repents of his sins, and we say over him that is to be washed this name alone (that is, of the Father,) when we lead him to the washing; for no one can give a name to the ineffable God; and if any should dare to say that there is a name, he is mad with desperate madness. And this washing is called illumination (φωτισμος), since those who learn these things are in mind illuminated. He who is illuminated is washed (δ φωτιζομενος λουεται) also in the name of Christ Jesus, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the holy Ghost, who, through the prophets, fore-announced the things concerning Jesus.”—“We, after thus washing him who has been persuaded and given his consent, bring him to those called brethren, where they have met together, about to join fervently in common prayers for ourselves, and for the illuminated, and for all others everywhere, that we may be worthy to learn true things, and be found by works good citizens, and keepers of what has been commanded, that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation.” There is a translation of this Apology by one Reeves; but it is very loose and inaccurate in these and other parts of it.

Apol. i.
Section 61.

Ibid.

Section 65.

The foregoing account is full and distinct, more so than

any other we have during the *two* first centuries, and not liable to much objection. There are two or three things added to the scriptural account of baptism. The formula, *In the name of the Father, &c.*, is increased. The expressions added were no doubt added on account of the heretics, who professed another god, beside the Creator, and denied the actual sufferings of Christ, and rejected the prophetic Spirit. Another addition is *fasting*; there being no baptism recorded in Scripture, in which this is enjoined. And there is another term given to it—*illumination*. The reason given takes away much of the objection to it; it was so given, because “the illuminated was washed,” and not because the washed was on that account illuminated.

Irenæus. As to *Irenæus*, we meet with nothing in him that is additional, except it be a singular idea respecting the necessity of the baptismal water with regard to our bodies: his words are, “Our bodies have received by washing (lavacrum) that unity which belongs to incorruption; but our souls, by the Spirit.” He calls Baptism regeneration several times.—The only terms then given to this ordinance during the *two* first centuries, were *regeneration*, *seal*, and *illumination*: and Justin has described in a particular manner the way in which it was administered.

Dr. Cave; Prim. Christian. I shall now notice the mode in which it was administered in the two succeeding centuries, and also some of the names given to it. The tenth chapter in *Dr. Cave's Primitive Christianity* is distinctly on this subject—the administration of Baptism in “the primitive Church.” His references clearly show, that his account takes in especially the third and fourth centuries. For the sake of brevity,

I shall select certain particulars, which will be sufficient to convey a correct view of its administration :—

1. The time for baptizing was mostly confined to Easter and Whitsuntide.

2. The candidate was made to stand with his face towards the *west*, the supposed place of darkness, when he was interrogated on the renunciation of the devil and his works; and when he renounced the devil, he was to stretch out his hand, as it were in defiance of him. This renunciation was made twice, before the congregation and at the font.

3. He was then *exorcised*. Dr. Cave's words are these :—
“ After this there was a kind of *exorcism*, and an *insufflation* or breathing in the face of the person baptized, (which *St. Austin* calls a most ancient tradition of the Church,) by which they signified the expelling of the evil spirit, and the breathing in the good Spirit of God.” And all this after the person had renounced the devil with the uplifted hand of defiance !!

4. The candidate being stript of his garments, was then *anointed* with oil, “ a ceremony,” says Cave, “ of an early date.”

5. Together with this the sign of the cross was made on the forehead.

6. Then followed the *trine* immersion : the person was immersed in water at the naming of each person of the Trinity.

7. After this immersion, *another* anointing took place.

8. Then the candidate had a *white garment* given him, which he was to wear for a whole week ; and then it was to be deposited in the church.

What an accumulation of ceremonials do we find here !

Not one of which is mentioned in the Scriptures in connexion with Baptism, nor even in the account which Justin gives us of this ordinance in the year 150, the date of his first Apology. How came they to be adopted, and whence were they borrowed? From tradition, of course, if we believe the Papists and the Oxford divines. They were handed down from the apostles: though it cannot be shown in which way. They must have been conveyed by some hidden and underground channel; for we cannot find any traces of them in the second century. We are not left, however, to what is conjectural on this head: for what the Fathers themselves say, clearly proves how they came into use. Some of them evidently originated in fanciful applications of Scripture expressions; some proceeded from Jewish ceremonies and traditions; and some from heathen practices. Their different sources were similar to those of the hodge-podge of Mahomedanism, to which the practices of the primitive Church had very probably given the bad example. The particular appointment of Easter and Whitsuntide, was an attempt to assimilate the Gospel to the Jewish dispensation: it was "the observance of days," which the apostle expressly disapproves. The renunciation of the devil with the *face to the west*, was borrowed either from the heathens, or from Jewish traditions. The *exorcism* was derived from the Jews, for we have proof that it was practised by them. It was also a heathen practice. The *unction* has also a double origin. Some of the Fathers fancifully refer it to Scripture, and some to the heathen practice of anointing their champions for the games; and Irenæus mentions it as used by heretics in his day.—The sign of

See Acts
xix. 13.

the *cross*, as Dr. Cave reports from Tertullian, was "no law of Christ, but brought in by a pious custom." The *trine immersion* was a refined improvement on Scripture, an addition, not countenanced by anything it contains, and introduced, as it appears, after Justin's time, for I can find in him no allusion to it. The *white garment* was a fanciful application of the words, "putting on Christ," and of "the white robes" mentioned in Rev. vii. 13. Of laying it up in the Church, I can find no precedent, except it be the keeping of the linen clothes of the priests in the temple. It may have been some heathen custom.

Such a number of new ceremonies must have been accompanied with new ideas: and the probability is, that these ideas preceded for the most part rather than followed the ceremonies. The fancies of Barnabas and Hermas, and of similar characters, had no doubt gained ground, and increased as they rolled down the descent of time, and by degrees became embodied in external rites. Nor is it improbable that *some* of the extravagant words applied to the ordinance, arose from the very imposing appearance it had attained, when surrounded with so many pompous ritual observances. And it is from expressions, derived evidently from such an origin as this, — some, the progeny on extravagant fancies which led to the introduction of ceremonials, — and some, arising from these imposing ceremonials when introduced — it is from such expressions as these that we are to obtain, it seems, a scriptural view of Baptism! If the writers of the Oxford Tracts wish to tell us what the Fathers thought of Baptism, let them do so; but let them not tell us such a manifest falsehood, as that their view of it is the view of Scripture. If it was,

how came they to add so much to the outward rite? Why did they give such an imposing appearance to it, having borrowed ceremonials for the purpose both from Jews and Gentiles, when, according to Scripture, and according to the manner in which it was administered by the apostles and others in their time, it was the simplest ordinance that could possibly be? When it was administered by the apostles, there were no fixed seasons—no fasting—no turning to the west with an uplifted hand to defy the devil—no anointing of the body after the manner of champions—no crossing of the forehead with the ointment—no insufflation or breathing out the devil after the person had defied him with uplifted hand—no white garment—and none afterwards laid up in the church. And these persons, who have added such strange things to the ordinance, not to be equalled by any ceremonials introduced even by Mahomet the false prophet, are those who are to give us as it appears, a sober, correct, and scriptural view of Baptism! Shame on you, men of Oxford! And had it not been for you, it would not have been necessary now to disclose the weaknesses and follies of these venerable ancients. But remember, that to choose follies and imitate extravagances, is far less excusable, under the favourable circumstances of our age, than to invent or adopt and propagate them at first.

Without alluding to whole passages from the Fathers, I shall mention some of the expressions they applied to baptism. They are such as these—illumination, bounty or gift (*χαρισμα*), absolution, redemption, the clothing of incorruption (*αφθαρσις ενδυμα*), unction, consummation, viaticum, &c. Some of these words seem clearly to be con-

nected with the ceremonials, which had been added, such as "unction," and the "clothing of incorruption." "Redemption" was derived, probably, from the heretics, for Irenæus tells us expressly in his first book that some of them called their baptism by that word :—"τουτο ειναι ^{Irenæus. Lib. i. c. 18.} την απολυτρωσιν θελουσι—they wish this to be (deemed) redemption." Their baptism was also accompanied with ointment; and it is not unlikely that this gave rise to the custom of anointing before baptism, afterwards adopted by the primitive Church. Baptism was called "viaticum," a voyage provision, because they used to baptize persons on their death-bed, a custom which, as it was often practised, served no other purpose but that of promoting the most awful delusion.

The vagrant spirit of superstition led many of the Fathers to very strange and incongruous notions; so that they entertained various and differing opinions respecting this ordinance. Some, as *Augustine*, maintained, that unbaptized infants could not be saved. Others, as *Gregory Nazianzen*, allotted to them a middle state, which was neither hell nor heaven. *Cyprian* maintained, that the minister possesses the regenerating power. It was on this ground that he held the necessity of baptizing those that had been baptized by heretics; for that they, not having the Holy Ghost, could not convey him. This was his main argument. *Tertullian* held, that the water was imbued with a sanctifying power; and he as well as *Augustine* held also, that in cases of necessity a layman might justly baptize. He indeed maintained, that the laity possessed the right to baptize, only it was their duty to waive it out of respect and deference to those who were appointed minis-

ters. Many of the Fathers held, that forgiveness was scarcely attainable by those who sinned after baptism, falsely interpreting the expression, "being once enlightened," in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and referring it to baptism. Thus, by "adapting to their own notions apostolic words," as the heretics in Irenæus's time did, without regarding "the order and context," they introduced a false opinion, wholly inconsistent with the whole tenour of Scripture; and by thus imitating the heretics, they "loosened the members of truth." And this strange idea it was that brought in the long and cumbrous train of penances, and those penances engendered the notion, that they were in some way expiatory and meritorious. The penitent was kept in a state of penance for years, and sometimes for life. How inconsistent was this with what Paul recommended as to the offender in the Corinthian Church. But to give some idea to my readers of the fantastic reveries of some of the Fathers on the subject of baptism, I shall set down some extracts from Tertullian's *De Baptismo*.

Tertullian. "Happy Sacrament of our water! by which, being washed from the faults of former blindness, we are made free for eternal life. But we, little fishes* . . . are born in water, nor are we otherwise saved than by remaining in water." He proceeds then, as the Oxford Tracts men do, in speaking of men's want of faith as to the effects of water, and refers the matter to the Almighty, with whom nothing is impossible. And alluding to the Spirit, "mov-

De Bapt. Sect. I.

* What is left out here borders so much on profaneness, that I choose rather to mention it in a note and in his own words;—secundum *lexon* nostrum Jesum Christum.

on the face of the waters," he goes on thus :—" Thou hast, O man, in the first place, to venerate the age of waters, because it is an old substance ; and then the dignity, because it was the seat of the Divine Spirit, being doubtless then more acceptable than other elements. When inhabitants were given to the world, the command was first to the waters to bring forth living things (*animas*). The first liquid brought forth what might live, lest it should seem wonderful in baptism that waters knew how to animate (*animare noverunt*)."
 Sect. 3.
 But all this, it seems, is not sufficient: neither the age nor the dignity of water, nor its capacity to animate, will be enough, without some additional virtue being given to it. This, however, is supplied : for he says,—“ The Spirit from heaven comes down immediately (that is, after the offered prayer,) and remains on the waters, sanctifying them by itself; and being thus sanctified, they drink in (*combibunt*) the power of sanctifying.” But he is not satisfied with even this, for he brings down an angel too to medicate the waters :—" The waters," he says, " being medicated through the intervention of an angel, the spirit (that is, of man) is washed corporally (*corporaliter diluitur*) in the waters, and the flesh is spiritually cleansed in the same (*spiritualiter mundatur*)."

Sect. 4.

This is surely enough, if anything can be so, to produce a surfeit even in the writers of the Oxford Tracts. If they can swallow, and digest, and feed on such strange vagaries, it appears to me that the only suitable situation for them is on the banks of the Ganges. For in this country we have no such " medicated waters," as Tertullian mentions, such as can " corporally " wash spirits, and " spiritually " cleanse

the flesh, nor any such waters as "drink, or suck in the power of sanctifying." The Ganges, and some other rivers in India, are the only rivers, which, according to report, contain such waters. Are we to be plunged again into the darkness of heathenism?

As the Fathers often symbolized what is plain, and what is to be taken only in its literal sense, so they sometimes *literalized* what is symbolical and figurative. They dealt often with what is figurative; as the heretics did, according to Irenæus, with what is parabolical. They interpreted figurative language literally, without regarding the concurrent testimony of Scripture; and by thus introducing "opposing truths, they destroyed the analogy of faith, and "loosened the members of truth." Hence their erroneous views on baptism. They interpreted symbolical language literally, and by this means they were led to ascribe to the outward ordinance what belongs to that which it represents. For instance, the expression, "Wash away thy sins," has been taken in a way inconsistent with other plain declarations of Scripture. Who washes away sins really, and actually, and effectually, but God by his Spirit, and that through faith in Christ? This is what the whole voice of Scripture confirms. Now in what sense was Paul to wash away his sins? In what other way, but symbolically? He was to use the symbol, calling upon God at the same time to do that for him which the symbol represented. Again, "the washing of regeneration" has been misapprehended in a similar way: some render the word, *bath*, but very wrongly, for there was nothing then resembling any such thing, no font, no baptistry; they baptized in rivers and ponds till the end of the second

century. The language of the ordinance is used, but it is to be understood spiritually, as the language of circumcision is to be taken in the following and similar passages,—“The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart;” that is, he will do to thine heart what is symbolized in circumcision. The *language* of the ordinance is here taken, but what the ordinance represents and symbolizes is intended. And “the renewing of the Spirit” which follows, expresses its subsequent and abiding influence in the progressive renewal of the soul. Regeneration is the first act; to be born of God, or of the Spirit, is the commencement: but the renewing is the continued operation of the Spirit. There is nothing in the context to call our attention to baptism.

Another thing to be remarked in the Fathers is this—they drew their conclusions often from no sound premises, and sometimes from no premises at all; as in the case of John iii. 5. They seem to have inferred from this text the inseparable connexion between baptism and regeneration. And so do the Oxford divines after them, like the blind, following blind guides. Our Saviour says, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” The only thing declared is, that they are both necessary, not indeed for heaven, but for the kingdom of God in this world, the denial of which is another great mistake of the Fathers. There is nothing said about their necessary connexion, and yet it is upon the proof that this text is supposed to afford, that this connexion is maintained! The Fathers have so interpreted the passage, this must therefore be the true sense! They have drawn this conclusion, though they

had nothing to draw it from ! This is surely nothing else but an addition to Scripture, made by uninspired men : and it is upon this miscalled scriptural foundation, which is no other than a sandy foundation constructed by the Fathers, that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is built ! and this text is brought in, and they “ speciously adapt ” their fable to it, after the fashion of the heretics, that it “ might not appear to be without evidence.” The Fathers might have thought of instances contravening their interpretation. If there were none in their days, which probably was not the case, they might have remembered Simon Magus, who was born of water, but clearly not born of the Spirit, otherwise Peter would not have told him what he did. He could not have been born of the Spirit, and yet be in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, except spiritual birth be something, and yet nothing, as Bishop Bethell represents it : for he maintains that it takes place in all *infants* that are baptized, on what authority, that is worth any thing, it remains to be shewn ; but when he comes to tell us what it is, his negatives so fully balance his affirmatives, that we find nothing left, but the mere “ shadow of a shade,” and scarcely so much.

The passage in *St. John*, referred to above, requires further notice. In the “ Plain Tracts for Critical Times,” lately published, this text is considered at large, and the subject is handled with great acumen and force of argument. The particular view given of the passage is somewhat new, but it wholly corresponds with the theory and facts of divine truth ; which is not the case with the opposite view, entertained and abetted by the writers

of the Oxford Tracts. There is every thing in the context, in the expressions used, and in the general doctrine of Scripture, in favour of the explanation given in the "Plain Tracts," while the context, the expressions used, and the general doctrine of Scripture, are all opposed to the view given by the Oxford Tracts; and which is not countenanced by any thing, but by the opinions of some of the Fathers. But this is not the only instance in which the Fathers are brought forward to make the Scripture say what it does not say, and what is inconsistent with the context, and with the general tenor of divine truth. An impartial consideration of the whole passage, and of its manifest design and object, cannot fairly lead us to any other conclusion than that stated in the Plain Tracts; which is, that the purpose for which the water and the Spirit are necessary, is, in order to become the ostensible members of God's kingdom or Church here on earth. The importance given to Baptism was no doubt on the ground of its being a public act by which a *confession* of Christ is made; which seems to be one of the main designs of the ordinance.

It may not be amiss to advert briefly to the language of this passage. In a previous verse, "to be born again," or, "from above," is said to be necessary in order to "*see* the kingdom of God," that is, as the word often means, in order to comprehend, understand or perceive the kingdom of God. But in the verse in dispute, the water is added to the Spirit, the author of the New Birth; and then the word "*see*," is changed into "*enter*"—"he cannot *enter* into the kingdom of God." It seems that the addition made, rendered the change necessary. It is

most evident that the expression, "the kingdom of God," has different significations as used in different connections. Its meaning is to be determined by the context, and by the terms employed in connection with it. "The kingdom of God is *within* you"—"he cannot *see* the kingdom of God"—"he cannot *enter* into the kingdom of God." The very language used requires, in these and other instances, that a different meaning should be admitted. What is clearly meant, in the first instance, is the reigning power of God in the heart, influencing and regulating the motives, elevating and strengthening the affections, directing and controlling all the movements within. In the second instance a different idea is conveyed, as connected with seeing or comprehending, then its blessings and privileges are clearly intended; the treasures of the kingdom are the things meant, as being objects of sight or spiritual perception, and enjoyment. But in the third instance, there is still another thing contemplated, which is implied, and necessarily implied in the term to "enter." We cannot enter into that kingdom which is within us; for it has entered into us. We cannot very properly be said to enter into blessings and privileges, which we are to comprehend and enjoy. What then is that into which we enter? That we may see the propriety of this, we must attach an idea to "kingdom," quite different from the two already given. We must view it as an associated body, as a community joined together: and into God's kingdom, in this sense it is that we can properly be said to enter. And this is evidently its meaning in this passage.

Now it is quite possible for us to have the kingdom of God within us, and to see the kingdom of God, and yet

not to enter into the kingdom of God; that is, not to join it in its associated form, which is the only meaning it has, and *can* have, when we speak of entering into it; while we may still enter into heaven, and be heirs of everlasting glory. All the past history of God's people affords a confirmation to this view. There were some before the flood who "called upon the name of the Lord." The kingdom of God was no doubt within them; and they saw, perceived and enjoyed its blessings and privileges: but we have no reason to think that they entered into it as a society, for we hear of no rite by which they were united together as one religious community. The same remark applies to some after the deluge—to Melchisedec, Lot, Job and his friends, and even to Abraham before he was circumcised, and also to the thief on the cross. Baptism is *now* necessary in order to become visible members of God's kingdom on earth, but not indispensable for an admission into the kingdom of glory.

As to the necessity of baptism, our Church has most wisely determined. It is astonishing how our justly venerated Reformers, when their difficulties are considered, had succeeded in throwing off the loads of rubbish which had collected in the Church, even from early ages. They represent baptism as *generally* necessary to salvation. It being an outward ordinance, and a positive, and not a moral command, its absolute necessity cannot on any just grounds be maintained. Thousands have no doubt been saved without it: and there is nothing in it that is necessarily essential to the sanctification of the soul. The obligation is derived only from a particular command, and not from any essential connection between God and

his creatures. Its obligation is exactly the same with that of circumcision, it being an ordinance intended to answer the very same purpose. That institution was suspended for thirty years of the Israelites' stay in the wilderness: and there may be circumstances now which would justify the non-observance of baptism; as it is plainly admitted even by the Fathers themselves, who entertained such extreme notions respecting it. To interpret scripture rigidly in one particular, under a profession of high respect for its authority, without having regard to its general and concurrent import, has always been the practice of men engaged in the promotion of erroneous and heretical sentiments. This was exactly the case with the heretics of old, as Irenæus plainly informs us.

Vide
Appendix,
B b.

Baptism is an ordinance, necessary to be observed when practicable, as circumcision was. We generally deem it so: and yet the Quakers do not deem it necessary; and they never observe it, for reasons evidently satisfactory to their own minds; not from any disrespect to the Saviour's authority, but from a conviction that the command is not now obligatory. And what is the result according to apparent evidence? Most think them wrong; and yet they, as a body, afford as ample proofs of possessing what the ordinance represents, as any body of Christians who observe it. Many of them most evidently possess all those graces and qualifications which fit men for heaven. He who will deny this, will only prove, that he himself is yet blind and ignorant of spiritual things. The fruits of the Spirit being produced, is a clear evidence of the Spirit's influence. And what does this shew, but that God regards this neglect as one of those

things which result from the imperfections of men in the present state, and in this instance as in others, from prejudices occasioned by the abuse of the ordinance; and that the neglect arising from principle, on a point not affecting any thing necessarily essential to religion, is no hindrance to that intercourse and communion which He deigns to carry on with his people in this world, in order to prepare them, and render them meet to dwell in his presence for ever.

These observations are made, not for the purpose of lessening a due and proper regard for baptism, but of diminishing extreme and unwarrantable notions respecting its benefits. I shall now conclude this letter with the appropriate words of *Justin* in his dialogue with Tryphon: —“What is the benefit of that baptism, which makes the flesh and the body only clean? Let your soul be baptized from wrath and from covetousness, from envy and from hatred: and behold, the body will be clean.”

Sect. 14.

MISOPAPISTICUS.

VIII.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Dial. cum
 Tryph.,
 sect. 80.

“Οὐ γὰρ ἀνθρώποις μάλλον, ἢ ἀνθρώπινους διδασκασίαν, αἰροῦμαι
 ἀκολουθεῖν, ἀλλὰ Θεῷ καὶ τοῖς παρ’ ἐκείνου διδασκασίαι.—I choose
 rather not to follow men or the doctrines of men, but God
 and the doctrines which are from him.”—Justin Martyr.

SIR,

It is a matter worthy of observation, that the two sacraments occupy but a very small share of attention from the Apostles in their writings. Baptism, merely as an outward ordinance, is not mentioned through the whole Epistles, except in these three places, 1 Cor. i. 13—17; xv. 29; Eph. iv. 5: and in the first it is referred to in such a way as to show its comparative non-importance: in the second, the “baptizing for the dead,” is the expression, and one of doubtful meaning; and in the third there is only the mere assertion, “that there is but one baptism.” In the seven other instances in which it is mentioned, the reference made to it is for the purpose of showing its spiritual import; Rom. vi. 3—5:

1 Cor. xii. 13; Gal. iii. 27; Eph. v. 26; Col. ii. 12; Tit. iii. 5; 1 Pet. iii. 21. It is never mentioned or alluded to, in *fourteen* of the Epistles, nor in the Revelation.—And as to the *Lord's Supper*, St. Paul alone refers to it, and that only in two places,—the tenth and the eleventh chapters of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, and then chiefly for the purpose of correcting abuses connected with it. Neither James, nor Peter, nor John (either in his Gospel, Epistles, or Revelation), nor Jude, make the least mention of it, nor allude to it, as I conceive, in any way. I state these *facts*, in which I believe I am correct, and I am sure that I am not far from being so, not with any design of depreciating the *due* importance of these ordinances, but of showing that the Apostles did not give them that *prominence* which some are now disposed to do. Had the Apostles entertained such high notions of them, as the men of the Oxford Tracts and their friends seem to do, they would not have said so little respecting them, especially when the very points mostly handled by them embrace the very things typified in these ordinances. They looked to the substance rather than to the shadow, whilst these men do exactly the reverse.

If grace is communicated only or chiefly through these rites, how was it that the Apostles made so little of them? If these be the only means, or the principal means, or even the common means, how came most of the Apostles never to mention them, and how was it that none of their number alluded much to them? This is inexplicable on any other ground than that a Protestant can admit, but on this—that they viewed them chiefly, as our church most justly represents them, as “outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace.” And they well knew how prone men are

to make too much of outward signs and ordinances, and therefore directed the whole force of their reasoning, counsel, and exhortation, to enforce what these rites signify and represent. If we allow these ordinances that importance claimed for them by Papists and those papistically inclined, then we must conclude, as the Papists do, that the Apostles' writings are very defective, and stand in need of being supplemented by the Fathers. But the misfortune is, that we must apply to the late rather than to the early Fathers. We must leap over the two first centuries at least, yea, three or four centuries, before we can possibly have the deficiency made up. We have already seen that this is the case with respect to baptism: for none except the cabalistic Barnabas (or the writer of the epistle under that name: for I can scarcely believe the Barnabas mentioned in Scripture to be its author), and the enthusiast Hermas, quoted as a great authority in the Oxford Tracts, make up this deficiency in any suitable degree. I shall now show that there is a still greater dearth of materials as to the *Lord's Supper*.

Even Barnabas and Hermas fail us here: for they contain nothing on the subject: there being not in them even an allusion, that I can find, to this ordinance. Nor does Clement or Polycarp say any thing on the point. Ignatius is the only apostolic Father that alludes to it at all, and that only in two or three places. The sentence already quoted in my fourth letter is the only objectionable one. He indeed mentions the word *altar* several times; and so does Hermas, at least in one place. But Ignatius's "altar" is the Church or Church-communion; and Hermas's, is that mentioned by Paul in Heb. xiii. 10; which is not on earth but in heaven, so called in conformity with the idea of

Christ's having entered into heaven, and having become "the minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle." The passage from *Hermas* in his tenth "command," is this: "For the prayer of a sad man has no efficacy to come up to the altar of God. And I said to him, Sir, Why has not the prayer of a sad man virtue to come up to the altar of God? Because, said he, that sadness remaineth in his heart. When, therefore, a man's prayer shall be accompanied with sadness, it will not suffer his requests to ascend pure to the altar of God." The apostolic Fathers, therefore, fail to supply the supposed deficiency. I might indeed quote a passage even from *Ignatius*, which is quite opposed to the views of the writers of the *Oxford Tracts*. They interpret a portion of the sixth chapter of *St. John's Gospel* in such a way as to refer it, as the Papists do, to the Lord's Supper. The language of *Ignatius*, in the following passage from his epistle to the Romans, is nearly the same, but he evidently refers not to the sacrament, but to spiritual things:—

Hermas.

Sect. 3.

"I take no pleasure in the food of corruption, nor in the pleasures of this life. I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, of the seed of David; and the drink that I long for is his blood, which is uncorruptible love, and perpetual life." He wrote this on his way to Rome, and in an epistle in which he earnestly requests the Romans not to exert their influence for his release. He could not, therefore, have the sacrament at all in view. It was spiritual eating and drinking alone that he most evidently contemplated: and with respect to the blood, his meaning is expressly and explicitly stated.

Ignatius.

Sect. 7.

The next author that contains any thing definitely on the subject is *Justin Martyr*: and what he says is deserving

Justin.

of attention; for, in his first apology, he undertakes to give an explicit account of the ordinance, as in the case of baptism. *Tatian* against the Greeks has nothing on the subject. *Athenagoras* in his embassy has, I think, but one sentence, and that is consistent with the views of Justin. I can find nothing to our purpose in *Theophilus* Antiochanus. Justin's account is the fullest and the most explicit that can be found in any writer of the second century, not excepting *Irenæus*. The words of Justin are the following:—

Justin. “Bread is brought to the president (*προεστωτι*) of the brethren, and a cup of water and wine (*κραμα* — wine mixed with water): and having received them, he sends up *praise and glory* to the Father of the universe through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and offers a long *thanksgiving* (*ευχαριστιαν επι πολυ ποιειται*) for these things vouchsafed by him. When he has finished the prayers and thanksgiving, all the people present joyfully acclaim (*επευφημει*,) saying, Amen. And Amen, in Hebrew means, Be it so. When the president has thus given thanks, and the people have joyfully acclaimed, they, who are by us called deacons, give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine and water, which had been thanked for (*απο του ευχαριστηθεντος αρτου και οινου και υδατος*), and they carry away some to the absent. And this food (*τροφη*) is called by us thanksgiving (*ευχαριστια*); of which it is not lawful for any other to partake, but him who believes that the things taught by us are true, and who has been washed with the washing which is for the remission of sins and unto regeneration (*εις αναγεννησιν*), and who so lives as Christ has taught. For we receive not these as common (*κοινον*) bread and common drink. But as Christ Jesus, our Saviour,

having been made flesh through God's word, has both flesh and blood for our salvation, so also have we been taught, that the food, thanked for by the prayer of his word—that this food, by which our blood and flesh after the change (that is, from being common into what is not common) are nourished, is both the flesh and blood of Jesus, who himself was made flesh. For the Apostles, in the records made by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered that Jesus commanded them,—that having taken bread, and given thanks, he said, *This do in remembrance of me ; this is my body* ; and that having likewise taken the cup and given thanks, he said, *This is my blood* ; and that he imparted (these) to them only.” In the following section he says, that after the acclaim, Amen, “ a distribution (διαδοσις) and a participation (μεταληψις) of the things thanked for, is made as to each, and sent by the deacons to the absent.”

Apol. 1.
sect. 65, 66.

Sect. 67.

In this account, which is very explicit, we have these particulars :—Bread and wine mixed with water, were brought to the president,—He offered praise and thanksgiving for these gifts of God's providence,—The people expressed their assent by a loud Amen ;—Then the deacons distributed to those present, and carried away some to the absent,—And the elements were taken in remembrance of Christ's passion. This was all ; there was no consecration of the elements, but merely the presenting of them as a thank-offering, or in the words of Athenagoras, “ a bloodless sacrifice” (αναιμακτον θυσιαν). This was the whole ceremony. Then we have the views of Justin on the subject, which appear to agree wholly with Scripture : he indeed grounds them on Scripture, and *not* on tradition. Consistently with this account is every thing that Justin has said on the point. He indeed applies

the word, sacrifice (*θυσια*), to this ordinance, but in the figurative sense of thanks-giving or of a thank-offering, and in no other, as the following passages from his *Dialogue* most clearly show :—

Justin.

“ We, who all, as one man, believe, through the name of Jesus, in God the Maker of the universe, having through the name of his first-begotten Son, put off filthy garments, that is, our sins, being purified as by fire through the word of his calling—we are the true high-priestly (*αρχιερατικον*) race of God, as God himself testifies, saying, that *sacrifices, well-pleasing to him and pure, shall be offered in every place among the nations*. But God receiveth sacrifices of none, except through his priests. Therefore all those, who through his name offer the sacrifices which Jesus Christ has enjoined to be made, that is, those made at the thanksgiving of (or for) the bread and cup (*επι τη ευχαριστια του αρτου και του ποτηριου*) in every place of the earth by the Christians—(all those persons) God having preferred testifies to be well pleasing to him; but the sacrifices that are made by you, and through your priests, he rejects, saying, *I will not receive your sacrifices from your hands*.

Sect. 116,
117.

Prayers and thanksgivings, done by the worthy, are *alone perfect* (*τελειαι μοναι*) and well-pleasing to him.”—“ The offering of fine flour, enjoined to be offered for those cleansed from leprosy, was a type of the bread of thanks-giving (*τυπος του αρτου της ευχαριστιας*) which Jesus Christ our Lord enjoined to make in commemoration (*εις αναμνησιν*) of the passion which he endured for men whose souls are cleansed from all wickedness; that, at the same time, we may thank God for having made this world, and all things in it for man, and for having made us free from the evil in

which we lived, and completely overthrown principalities and powers, through him who became a sufferer according to his will."

Sect. 41.

Bread and wine, according to Justin, were a thank-offering for the creation of the world, and for the salvation of men, accompanied with the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving: and this offering, and these sacrifices, were considered as done, not only by the president, but also by all present; for he says that the Christians, yea, all of them, were "the true high-priestly race of God," that they might offer these sacrifices. And he brings a reason why they must be so, for "God," he says, "receives sacrifices of none, except through his priests." The views of Justin scarcely come up to those of many Protestants; much less do they countenance anything favourable to Popery. His views may be stated in two sentences,—the elements were presented as a thank-offering, or a sacrifice of this kind, accompanied with sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving for the things of creation, and for the blessings of salvation; and they were then taken in commemoration of Christ's sufferings. Sacrifice, as applied by Justin, is intelligible, and perhaps justifiable; but through a gross perversion, it has in after ages been adduced for the purpose of countenancing the greatest of all impieties—the Popish transubstantiation.

The foregoing account of Justin's view of this Sacrament, wholly corresponds with what Bishop *Kaye* says, in his work on Justin's writings. His words are these:—"With respect to the eucharist, we find that in Justin's time water was mixed with the wine; and that the president, having taken the bread and the wine mixed with water, offered up *praises and thanksgivings* to God; that

Bp. Kaye's
Justin,
p. 90.

the deacons *then* delivered the bread and wine to all present, and carried away a portion to those who were absent."

The only author in the second century, besides those already named, who speaks explicitly with respect to the Lord's Supper, is IRENÆUS. He has several references to this subject in his works; and his views, for the most part, coincide with those of Justin. He had to do with heretics, who denied the real incarnation of our Lord; and he very properly brings forward the sacramental institution to prove that our Saviour was really made flesh. Tertullian, after him, made use of the same argument, and some of his words, in his Fourth Book against Marcion, and in the fortieth chapter, are these:—"The bread received and distributed to his disciples he made his own body, by saying, *This is my body*, that is, the *figure* of my body (*figura corporis mei*). But it could not be a figure, unless there was a real body." This is Irenæus's argument. But in this, as in some other instances, he carries his point beyond the limits of truth, from too great an anxiety, as even Feuudentius admits on some other subjects, to find answers to the heretics. He seems to hold that the consecrated elements had some effect in immortalizing even our very bodies. "As the bread," he says, "which is from the earth, receiving the invocation of God, is no more common bread, but thank-offering (*ευχαριστία*), consisting of two things, what is earthly and what is heavenly; so our bodies, partaking of the thank-offering, are no more corruptible (*φθάρτα*), having hope of the resurrection, which is for ever." It is a notion similar to what he expresses respecting the effect produced by the water

Tertullian
Lib. iv.
Cap. 40.

Lib. iv.
Cap. 34.

at baptism on our bodies. With the exception of this fanciful idea, what he says of the sacrament is not liable to much objection, though there seems to have been in his time an evident increase of importance attached to the outward ordinance.

As in the case of baptism, so with respect to the Lord's Supper, I shall avail myself of what we find in *Cave's Primitive Christianity*. The eleventh chapter of his first book is on this subject. He undertakes to speak, as to this ordinance, of the *persons, time, place, and manner* of its administration. I shall select the main particulars:—

1. The *persons*.—Those who *administered* it were the pastors and governors of the Church. The distribution of the elements, according to Tertullian, was made by the presidents, but according to Justin, by the deacons. The practice, it seems, was variable and not uniform. The *communicants* were the baptized, except those under censure; and they continued so sometimes for life, a severity wholly inconsistent with Scripture. Newly-baptized *infants* had the Sacrament also given to them; on what authority and for what good reason it is not easy to know. The elements were also carried to the distant and to the sick, the bread being dipped in the sacramental cup: and in case of those under censures, if they had expressed a desire to be reconciled to the Church, this bread dipped in the cup was given them, sometimes even after they were dead!! but this usage was abrogated afterwards by several councils. The Christians also in early times kept by them some parts of the Eucharist against emergent occasions! and gave and sent some to their friends; but this custom was also abolished by councils. Now almost

Cave's
Prim.
Christ.
Lib.i. c.11.

all these uses made of the sacrament were very foolish and strangely superstitious; and yet they were the usages of the primitive Church.

2. The *time*.—It was at first every day, or whenever they assembled for public worship; then four times a week—Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday; afterwards every Sunday; then every month; and at last thrice a year—Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide. This is the universal consent of Fathers! I do not blame the primitive Church, but the boast of universal consent. These were changes on a point which admits of them, it being one of the many things left wholly to the discretion of the Church, to be determined according to circumstances. There are those in our day who seem anxious to revive the weekly communion. If such a thing tends to spiritual edification, let it be done. But if the custom is revived for the purpose of propagating a superstitious reverence for the outward signs, and of deluding men with the idea of something like the *opus operatum*, the attempt is wicked, mischievous, and destructive, and our bishops are in duty bound to put a stop to it. The pretence of edification is of course made; but then we must consider the views and sentiments of such individuals, and if their views are extravagant and superstitious, their object must be of the same character. Our Saviour has only said, “Do this in remembrance of me;” and did not say how often. But then it is said, this was the practice in the Apostles’ times. Very true. But if this practice is binding, how came the primitive Church to change it? And if this practice is binding, so is the community of goods. Let that also be revived. Besides, on this principle, we

must have no churches, nor chancels, nor altars, which these men seem so fond of; but we must celebrate the ordinance in private houses, for this was the practice in the Apostles' times. What a strangely inconsistent thing is superstition! Again, with respect to the time of the *day*, there was a great variety in the primitive Church: Tertullian says, that it was celebrated at supper-time, and sometimes in the morning, before day. Cyprian pleads strenuously for the morning, and the morning was afterwards the time almost universally observed. This is another point, in which there is no scriptural decision; but it is left wholly to the judgment and discretion of the Church; and any stir made by individuals about it can only be ascribed either to weakness, ignorance, or superstition.

3. The *place*.—It was *instituted* in an upper room in a private house. It was celebrated in private houses in the Apostles' time, and some time after, and during persecutions, in vaults under ground, and at the tombs of martyrs. When churches were built, it was celebrated in them, and in process of time, at the east-end, first on a table of wood, afterwards of stone, which was called by the Fathers, the altar. When it was that it attained this name, *Cave* does not say. The Laodicean Council, and many other councils, strictly forbade its celebration in private houses, thus directly undoing the earliest practice. I find no fault with them, but with those who stand for things which are to be regulated by circumstances.

Vide
Appendix,
C c.

4. The *manner*.—The sacrament was administered after the public service; offerings, consisting, among other things, of bread and wine, were then made by the people,

and placed on the table by the minister. From these the sacramental elements were taken ; and these supplied their love-feasts, held at first before the sacrament, and at a later time after it. Then the deacons brought water to the bishop and presbyters to wash their hands, in imitation of what the Psalmist says, " I will wash my hands in innocency : " and they kissed one another. A prayer for all persons and states was then offered, followed by responsive petitions—the consecrating prayer, and breaking of the bread. Then the minister delivered the elements to the deacons, and the deacons into the hands of the people, who received them at one time in a reclining posture, afterwards while standing. We are not told by *Dr. Cave* when the practice of kneeling commenced. The posture itself is of no consequence ; for there is no rule, no command on the subject : but it is probable that the increased reverence for the ordinance introduced kneeling : but that reverence being reduced in our church into its suitable measure, the posture becomes immaterial ; only it is well, for order's sake, that it should be uniform in every communion. After this they sang hymns and psalms, the bishop prayed and blessed the people, and they kissed each other the second time, and parted. This account evidently includes the practices of the third and fourth centuries ; for there are many more ceremonies mentioned here, than what Justin in the year 150 relates. It is amazing how fast and how abundantly ceremonies grew in former times. They were some of the most prolific things that belonged to antiquity. And yet some would have us believe that they were all, or almost all, apostolic.

The foregoing account contains several things very ob-

jectionable. The customs were not uniform nor permanent, but continually varying. The primitive Church of one century differs widely from the primitive Church of another century : and which of them are we to choose ? The ceremonies were constantly on the increase : if some were discontinued, a still greater number were introduced, till the plain and simple ordinance as instituted by our Saviour was almost lost in them. The ideas entertained of it of course increased in proportion, till at last, in succeeding ages, the monstrous dogma of Transubstantiation was brought forth ; and being carefully nursed on the lap of superstition, it was finally adopted by the whole body of the Romish Church. It was the progeny of ceremonials early introduced ; and let these ceremonials be renewed again, and the same monster will rise again from them. The writers of the Oxford Tracts seem to know this well ; for they are anxious to increase rituals, and appear disposed to think favourably of this strange doctrine.

These things being clearly before us, are we to be told that the exposition of this ordinance is to be sought for from the Fathers, or the primitive Church ? We have the original documents, and we see that they deviated far from them ; and are they the persons to teach us the meaning of this sacrament ? Are they who gave it to infants and dead men, and kept by them parts of it for emergent occasions, and introduced so many novelties in its celebration, making it more like a Jewish or a Heathen ordinance, than a simple Christian institution—are they the men to instruct us in its spiritual meaning and intention ? Let those who are intent on being deluded think so, if they please : but let not the public be thus deluded. And let

not the attempts made to "adapt" the primitive fables to "apostolic words," after the manner of the heretics, be allowed to deceive any: but let all keep to the word of God, interpreted consistently with itself, and receive the simple meaning of the sacrament as there given, "This do in *remembrance of me*"—"As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do *shew* the Lord's death till he come." And to shew what our act in eating and drinking means, it is called (the thing signified being put for the sign—a mode of speaking quite common in Scripture) "the communion," or participation of the body and blood of Christ, in the same way as to eat the Passover means to eat the paschal lamb. It is an outward and visible act, which represents what is inward, that is, the act of faith; and we profess thereby that we feed on Christ by faith with thanksgiving.

John vii.
27—63.

To add importance to the eucharist, the Papists connect with it a part of the sixth chapter of St. John, and maintain that our Saviour speaks there of this institution: and the divines of the Oxford Tracts seem disposed to do the same. But such an interpretation is wholly illegitimate, being consistent neither with the context, nor with the order of time, nor with scriptural truth, nor with the explanation which the passage itself contains. The *context* cannot admit it. The discourse begins in the 27th verse; and it is by separating a few verses from their connection, that this interpretation gains some appearance of truth. Our Saviour first speaks of the meat that endureth, which he was destined to give. The Jews mentioned the manna, and he took occasion to represent himself as the true manna or bread of life, that came down from heaven, that

he might give life unto the world ; and as he proceeded with this subject, to give his hearers some idea of the atonement, he refers to his flesh and blood as being this bread of life, and speaks of the necessity of eating the one and drinking the other, that they might not die but live for ever. And he closes this representation of himself as he began, by setting himself forth as the bread of life, which must be eaten in order to obtain life. What sort of eating he had in view is frequently mentioned. Coming to him, seeing him, and believing in him, are expressly stated : and with faith or believing, he several times connects life and everlasting life ; and the same he connects with eating the bread of life, and with eating his flesh, and drinking his blood. What then is the obvious conclusion, but that eating his flesh and drinking his blood, is what is done by believing, or in other words, that it is to “ feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving ; ” there being here evidently a similar use of language, as when drinking “ the living water ” is mentioned, which means a partaking of divine grace by faith ? According to an expression of *Augustine*, “ *Credere in eum est manducare panem vivum ;*—to believe in him is to eat the living bread.”

Vide
Appendix,
D d.

This interpretation is also wholly incongruous with reference to *time*. It makes our Saviour to insist on the necessity of that which had not yet been appointed, of what was not even known in any degree, of what had no existence, and of what therefore was wholly impracticable and impossible. That that should be taught as necessary for life, which was wholly unknown, having not been instituted, is a notion which nothing but the strongest pre-

judice or the most deluded ignorance could ever entertain. To anticipate and to realize future events, when revealed, by faith, is practicable: but actually to eat and to drink material elements by anticipation, when those elements are not even known, and when there is no command to do so, is an art and ingenuity, of which Papists, and such divines as the writers of the Oxford Tracts, are alone capable.

The *sense* introduced by this interpretation, is also wholly inconsistent with Scripture. Eternal life is most expressly connected here with eating his flesh and drinking his blood. This *cannot* be true of the sacramental eating and drinking: for that, as the Apostle warns us, *may* be attended and followed by condemnation. The one has eternal life inseparably connected with it, as it is evident from the language used; but the other *may* produce death. Besides, the *end* and purpose for which each is said to be necessary, is essentially different. We are to eat and drink, according to this passage, that we may not die but live for ever: but we are to partake of the sacramental elements for another end, in order to commemorate the Saviour's death; it is to be done in *remembrance* of Him, or to *shew* his death till he come. This single consideration is quite enough of itself to overturn the whole system, and to prove that the attempt to identify what is said here with the Lord's Supper, is vain and groundless.

But there is what may be considered an explanation of the meaning given in the 63rd verse: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." To prevent them from supposing that he meant any thing

material or gross by eating his flesh, he tells them, "the flesh profiteth nothing:" and to impress on their minds the spiritual character of what he had said, he adds, "The words that I speak to you, they are spirit," that is, spiritual, "and they are life," that is, they refer to life.—the eternal life of which he had been speaking to them. Not inappropriate in some respects are the sentiments of Tertullian on this verse:—

"Because the Jews thought his word hard and intolerable, as if he had appointed that his flesh should be really eaten by them, (*verè edendum*), to refer the state of salvation to the Spirit, he premised, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth;" and then added, "The flesh profiteth nothing," that is, to quicken. Then follows also what he wished to be understood as to the Spirit: "The words which I have spoken to you are Spirit, and life;" as also before: "He that heareth my words, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath eternal life; and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death into life:" constituting therefore the word the vivifier, for the word is spirit and life, he called the same also his flesh: and because the Word was made flesh, it is hence to be *sought after* for the purpose of life, and is to be *devoured by hearing*, and *ruminated on by the mind*, and *digested by faith*." The following are the words of Whitby:—"The words that I speak to you, they are spirit," we cannot doubt but that he speaks of eating and of drinking his flesh and blood *spiritually*." This indeed *may* be done while partaking of the Sacrament; but there is no necessary connection between eating and drinking spiritually, and eating and drinking sacramentally. Tertullian evidently

Tertullian
De resur.
Sect. 37.

Whitby.

connects the eating and drinking with hearing and with faith.

But then there is a vast importance and a mysterious meaning attached to the words, *This is my body*. And we are told by these men, as we are by the Papists, that this is a matter of faith, and that we must believe. Believe what? Believe that there is some mysterious meaning in the words? This is to believe what they say, and not to believe what the words express. How do they know that there is a mysterious meaning in them? The primitive Church does not tell us so, nor the *early* Fathers: the Church of Rome does, and so do many of the later Fathers. But am I to believe them in what is contrary to the primitive Church? and not only so, for that would not be much; but also contrary to Scripture itself, consistently interpreted? If I am to believe, I must have some evidence besides the mere saying of any uninspired men; yea, besides the decrees of all the councils that ever have existed. I must have some evidence, and a Divine evidence for a Divine truth, else my faith will be a mere fancy, the faith of enthusiasts and fanatics. If there be some mysterious import in these words, there must be something of the same kind in all similar modes of speech, such as, *that Rock was Christ—I am the way—I am the door—The seed is the word of God—My Father is the husbandman*, &c. When I find that this mode of speaking runs through the whole Scripture, am I to believe what men may choose to say, who produce no proof for what they say, at least none that is worth anything? It is really painful in the extreme to read some of the delirious and Popish ravings of these writers on this subject.

There is an attempt to propagate the notion, that the Prayer-book expounds the Scriptures, and that the Fathers are to expound the Prayer-book. Nothing can be more groundless than this. What do our Articles say? How are the creeds received? They are received, "*for* they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture," and not because they were received by the primitive Church. How does our Church regard what is called Catholic truth or tradition, and the decrees of councils? We may learn this from her avowal, "that whatsoever is not *read* therein (Scripture), nor may be *proved* thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." This is to throw overboard at once all tradition and all decrees of councils, and to subject the Prayer-book and all the doctrines of the Church itself to the Scriptures. I will now close my letter in the words of Chillingworth, "No tradition but that of Scripture can derive itself from the fountain. There is no sufficient certainty but of Scripture, only for any considering man to build upon. I am *fully* assured, that God does not, and therefore man ought not, to require any more than this: to believe the Scripture to be God's word—to endeavour to find the true sense of it—and to live according to it."

Article VI.

Chillingworth.

MISOPAPISTICUS.

POSTSCRIPT.—The efficacy of Sacraments, next to the virtue of orders, is made a main point in the Oxford Tracts. If the Sacraments were represented as *means* of grace, there would be no objection; but when they are made,

or set forth as things in themselves efficacious, provided they be administered by an episcopally-ordained minister, there is a manifest error. Were they not thus made, there would be no reason to say so much about them, as there are no Protestants except Quakers, who do not deem them to be generally necessary, and who do not regard them as useful means of grace, and also as signs of spiritual things and pledges of God's love and mercy. The only difference that can exist is this,—that the Oxford divines view them as having something of an inherent efficacy, while others regard them as efficacious and beneficial only when the mind of the recipient is in a right state. These divines seem not to be quite prepared distinctly to admit the *opus operatum* of the Sacraments; and yet what they often say amounts to nothing less. It is not the *qualifications* of the recipients that are dwelt upon, but the necessity and efficacy of the Sacraments; which can make no other impression on the reader, than that they produce effects of themselves, independent of the state of mind with which they are received,—an error, the most mischievous and delusive that can well be conceived, having no other tendency than to draw away the mind from regarding “the power,” and to fix it on “the form of godliness.” It is to terrestrialize what is celestial, to materialize what is spiritual, by transferring to a bodily act what is peculiar to the mind.

That Sacraments have any virtue of themselves, or that any grace is inseparably connected with them, has no countenance from Scripture; nor is the sentiment consistent with it, nor with reason or common sense, nor with facts. It has nothing in its favour but the opinion or the fancy of

some of the Fathers. When the Jews imbibed the error, that there was some inherent virtue in their sacrifices, they became objects of God's displeasure, so that he even abhorred them. And can we think that the Almighty otherwise regards the sacraments, when they are viewed as having some inherent peculiar virtue in them, or as working somehow after the manner of charms. It is not the mere reception of them, but the exercise of repentance and faith and of other suitable graces, that render them beneficial. And what therefore ought to be chiefly enforced, is the necessity of those graces, and not the mere efficacy of the Sacraments: for the whole of that efficacy depends entirely on the possession and exercise of such graces.

The same may be said of orders. It is not the conferring, but the receiving, that is to be chiefly regarded. What a difference on this subject is there between the writings of these divines, and the Epistles of St. Paul! Their absorbing subject is the apostolical succession, while St. Paul, speaking of ministers, dwells mostly on their qualifications. These writers seem to think that the Bishop by the very act of ordination, confers some spiritual gift, irrespectively of any thing in the candidates. He indeed gives them authority, on the *supposition* of their being *previously* fitted, to teach publicly in the Church. Whatever other gift he has to confer, he can confer it only on those that are rendered by divine grace capable of receiving it. The reception does no more depend on the bishop, than on the minister who administers the Sacraments, but on the recipient. This is scriptural, and stands with reason and with facts. What does ordination do for those who come unfitted for the work they

undertake? Does it qualify them by the bestowment of any spiritual gift? Does it enlighten their minds to understand the Scriptures, or make them apt to teach, or translate them from a thoughtless state of mind into sober and serious piety? Does it give them a new heart, or does it give a new bent to their wills and affections? We too well know, that these are not the effects. The only thing done by conferring orders on those not spiritually qualified, is to confer a sacred office on the wholly unfit, and who are more likely to receive thereby a curse than any spiritual gift or a blessing.

What do these writers aim at? Is it to propagate the idea that orders can convert the servants of the devil into servants of God, or that ungodly and presumptuous intruders are clothed by means of orders with all the necessary qualifications of true and faithful ambassadors? He who exercises the sacred office without being qualified from above, is somewhat like a person authorized by a steward to do something for his master, but whom the master has never recognised; he bearing not the character required in the master's servants according to his own rules. Those whom God appoints and sends, are appointed and sent to turn men out of darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto God: and if this be not their main end and purpose, the chief object of their efforts, they are not sent by God, but only by man, and are no more than mere hirelings. To say that every one ordained by a bishop is sent by God, is to make the Almighty the author of sin, and the propagator of evil; it is to confound his permissive with his ordinative will, and thus to mix good and evil together in one chaotic mass.

As the adult person, who is baptized without having repentance and faith, or who takes the eucharist without these and other graces, is an unworthy recipient, so is he who takes orders without the essentially necessary qualifications. If he be not a renewed man, a Christian indeed, and possess not that faith and love which are from God, and the other ministerial graces required in Scripture, he is not qualified for his office, whatever his learning or knowledge may be; he must therefore be an unworthy recipient; and no commission, no conferring of orders can supply these defects, for it was never designed to supply them. To take orders therefore without possessing those things which qualify for orders, and on the ground of which alone can they ever be justly conferred, is an act of the most awful presumption and imposture; and to connect with such an act the conferring of a spiritual gift, is extremely absurd: it is, as it were, to amalgamate the most repugnant elements.

IX.

THE SYSTEM OF THE OXFORD TRACTS.

March 22, 1838.

Δια της πανουργως συγκεκροτημενης πιθανοτητος παραγουσι τον νουν των απειροτερων, και αιχμαλωτιζουσιν αυτους, ραδιουργουντες τα λογια Κυριου, εξηγηται κακοι των καλως ειρημενων γινόμενοι; και πολλους ανατρεπουσιν, απαγοντες αυτους προφασει γνωσεως.—Η πλανη καθ' αυτην μεν ουκ επιδεικνυται, ινα μη γυμνωθεισα γενηται καταφωρος; πιθανω δε περιβληματι πανουργως κοσμουμενη, και αυτης της αληθειας αληθεστεραν εαυτην παρεχειν φαινεται δια της εξωθεν φαντασιαις τοις απειροτεροις.—“ They lead astray, through a craftily managed speciousness, the mind of the unexperienced, and captivate them, handling deceitfully the oracles of the Lord, being bad expounders of things fairly said; and they subvert many, seducing them by the appearance of knowledge.—Error does not shew itself alone or by itself, lest being naked it should become apparent; but being craftily adorned by a specious covering, it appears to the unexperienced, through an outward splendour, to be truer even than the truth itself.”—*Irenæi Prefatio.*

Sir,

I have already gone far beyond my first intention on the

subject that I have been handling. But this shall be my last letter for the present. My design is to point out the general character, and, as it were, to trace the *genealogy* of the system I am opposing. Its abettors seem to possess certain evident lineaments, by which they may be clearly identified with a set of men, that have ever been the real, if not at all times ostensible, opposers of true spiritual godliness. And it may be useful to draw the attention of the public to this point, to prevent them from being deceived by things plausible and imposing, while their tendency and consequences are subversive of vital religion. "Error," says Irenæus, "is persuasive (*suasorius*), and similar to truth, and requires disguises; but truth is without disguise, and therefore believed by children."

Lib. iii.
Ch. 15.

To conclude that *all*, who join a party that is really promoting an erroneous system, have no religion, is what facts will not justify. There have been some good men living in communion with the Church of Rome, who, notwithstanding its essential character as an apostate Church, still remained in it, though evidently without partaking of its main errors, and without being tinctured with its Anti-christian spirit. There were some spiritually-minded individuals among the Pharisees in our Saviour's time, though as a party he denounced them as wicked and hypocritical. There are imperfections belonging to the best of men in this world: but these are to be distinguished from the errors which form the essential parts of a bad system, and which are often concealed or accompanied by what is commendable and praiseworthy, and even by some things that are true and evangelical. What proceeds from a weak judgment, ignorance or prejudice,

is very different from what arises from attachment to the erroneous parts of a system. When error is mixed with truth, as is always the case, the good man adopts the system for the truth, and the ungodly or the superstitious man for the sake of the error. So that in this world of darkness and imperfection, such as are truly spiritually-minded may be found at times uniting with the ambitious and worldly-minded in advocating some things essentially wrong, when speciously coloured with the appearance of what is good.

Vide
Appendix
E e.

To ascertain the true character of a system, it is necessary to mark its *prominent* features and the evident tendency of its chief doctrines, or of such as are mostly valued and mostly inculcated. It is the *inculcation* that proves which are deemed chief, and not the profession. That any system should contain or include some portions of truth, is what must be the case in the present day, in order to insure any success. Some essential truths are professed even in the church of Rome, though they are awfully neutralized by errors, and concealed under such a load of ceremonials that they can scarcely be discovered. The system of the Oxford Tracts contains some important truths, and has evidently improved, in some respects, in the hands of its present advocates: for it is an old system, which has existed for many ages under different forms and modifications. During the last century, it was cold and freezing, embraced indeed and defended, but manifesting no warmth, no vitality. Worldliness had absorbed all its vital spirits. Hence its decay and weakness, much deplored now by its present abettors. When religion revived and gained ground, the dry arguments,

declamation, abuse, and persecution of those who embraced it, produced scarcely any effect. Combined as it was with worldliness and even irreligion and infidelity, it retained as its adherents only the *caput mortuum* of Christianity. But it has since formed a new alliance. Without this it must have ere now sunk into the grave in this country. A religious feeling had so prevailed, that a cold, worldly, and irreligious spirit could not possibly have gained the popular favour. This was not seen, until the light of the Gospel shone on the country : for these high claims were not disputed, when religious darkness overspread the land. But the works of *Daubeney* and others had in a short time lost almost all their influence. But another opportunity for the revival of the system has occurred. Irreligion and worldliness, combined with all the influence of those in power, had completely failed to support it. It has therefore become allied with other things, and obtained the assistance of other sort of helpers. But its new associates are no strangers to it : they have been its supporters many times before. It has now formed a compact with fasting, long prayers, observance of days, great show of devotion, ceremonials, Catholic truth, and tradition, the most powerful and influential of any supporters with which it has ever been associated.

In tracing the genealogy of this system, I might easily go beyond the reasonable limits of a letter. But I shall be brief. I am not sure whether its origin is not from Cain. Though an ungodly man, he brought an offering to God, and seemed evidently to think that the offering was sufficient of itself. He had clearly too high an idea

of a mere outward act of worship. We have the most undoubted proofs of its being the favourite system of the Jews in the time of the prophets. The cry of its abettors then, as well as in other ages, was, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,"—which means just the same thing as "the Catholic Church, the Catholic Church," in the mouths of the advocates of the Oxford Tracts. When we come to our Saviour's time, we find the Pharisees the strenuous supporters of this system;—"We are Abraham's children," that is, in the language of the Oxford Tracts, "We are the apostles' lineal descendants." As then, so now, the *true* descendants, are those who possess the same faith, and the same spirit. One of our Saviour's own disciples was in some degree infected with this error. He saw one, who did not follow Christ *with them*, casting out devils, and forbad him. He expected commendation, but instead of that he met with reproof; and that reproof is as suitable to the Oxford divines, as it was to him. Notwithstanding this evident condemnation of the system by the Saviour himself, it is still adopted and maintained! St. Paul had to oppose this system in his day. Confidence in the flesh, which means outward privileges,—subjection to ordinances, which were the doctrines and commandments of men,—voluntary humility,—show of wisdom and will-worship,—traditions of men,—affected zeal,—boasting of lineage,—and bringing to bondage: these are some of the things which he condemned; and they are the very limbs of this system. And were he now to write to the Oxford divines, he would have only to notice and reprobate the very same things under some small modifications. In the primitive Church, especially after the second

Phil.
iii. 3—8.

Coloss.
ii. 20—22.

Coloss.
ii. 18, 23.

Col. ii. 8.
Gal. iv. 18.

2 Cor. xi.
20, 22.

century, we find the same system gaining ground. The austerities practised, needless fastings, observance of saints' days, celibacy, &c., were parts of it: and it was caressed and nurtured, till it finally brought forth the Man of Sin, the monster of iniquity, the very Antichrist that had been long foretold, which is no other than Romish Popery. The system then acquired a perfection it never before attained. This being clearly the case, it is no strange thing, that Popery should be viewed with a degree of complacency by the writers of the Oxford Tracts, it being nothing more than the creature of their own system. There is a sympathy which exists between all fraternities: and it would be quite unnatural that it should be otherwise. They have been sedulously trying to remove the objections and antipathies of Protestants to what *Cecil* calls the "masterpiece" of the prince of darkness. They have been attempting to show that Popery is not the Man of Sin, and that instead of being the abomination of all the earth, it is a true Church of Christ; thus converting darkness into light, and ascribing the work of the evil one unto Him who hateth iniquity, and calling a den of thieves the temple of the living God!

When we look back on the state of things in this country, we find evident proofs of the existence and prevalency of this system. *Thomas à Becket* was a celebrated advocate of it. From being the most profligate of men, drinking the spirit of this system, he became the most zealous and austere saint. It was caressed and embraced by the persecuting *Bonner*, and was strenuously maintained by him and others against the efforts of our illustrious Reformers, who were attempting to destroy it. Hence our Reform-

ers are no great favourites with the Oxford divines. Bonner and his associates are far more closely allied to them. It was the system of *Laud* and others of his day ; and by advocating it he overturned both the Church and the Throne. Notwithstanding the check it received at the rebellion, through the advantages derived from some excesses which then took place, produced in part by its friends in disguise—the Jesuits,—it gained new strength and vigour during the licentious reign of Charles the Second. Having the civil power on its side, it had no need of affected zeal, mortifications, and austerities. As in some instances in the Church of Rome, many of its strict advocates were notorious for religious apathy and open ungodliness ; some of them became “ the apes of Epictetus,” and taught the divinity of heathen philosophers ; and a few imitated the austerities of the anchorites. And these, according to the Oxford Tracts, were the palmy days of their system ! And it is from authors of this age they make most of their quotations. Then in the times of James the Second a contest took place between two parties maintaining essentially the same principles. The Nonjurors wanted to set up an Anglican Popery, while James wished to introduce the Romish. This was the true nature of the contest ; and it terminated, through God’s gracious providence, in the exclusion of both : and a mortal wound was given to the system, which the Oxford divines are now very anxious to heal. When it was found impracticable, owing to such men as these of the Oxford Tracts, to introduce a moderate system, proposed by the best men of that time, the very prop of the system attempted to be maintained was removed, toleration being granted. Its advocates, nursed on

the lap of indulgence, long protected in their unjust claims by the law, had no taste for zealous exertions, and no disposition to undertake austerities, which is the only stay it can have, when the civil power is withdrawn. This mistake has not been seen, at least no attempts have been made to remedy it, until of late years. The system was found at last to be crumbling into dust : and its abettors, seeing no means of supporting it, but by what, in the absence of the civil power, or in opposition to it, has always been resorted to, have at last gathered fresh resolution, and assumed amazing zeal ; and they now strenuously advocate exertions, fastings, mortifications, and austerities, and speak strongly against the apathy of their friends in past times. In the advertisement to the first volume of their Tracts, they complain, that “ a lamentable increase of sectarianism had followed, being occasioned (in addition to other more obvious causes,) first by the *cold aspect* which the new church doctrines have presented to the *religious sensibilities of the mind*, next to their *meagreness* in suggesting motives to restrain it from seeking out a more influential discipline.” They are indeed wise in their generation ; for they have recourse to the only means that can possibly save their system from entire ruin. The different religious Societies, the glory of the land, have done to it amazing damage, and especially the spread of the Bible, to which they very naturally seem not to be mightily favourable.

Irreligion in some form or another has for the most part been combined with this system. The most devotional, at one time, have often been found the most irreligious at another. The Book of Sports, which was to be read on Sunday and practised too, was one of the

measures devised and enforced by men of this party. The very devout *Laud* was an admirer and promoter of this book ! whom the Oxford divines would have doubtless canonized before now, had they succeeded in their attempts respecting poor bishop Ken. The people were all to assemble for worship in the morning, and be very devotional, and then, as a sort of premium or bribe for attendance, they were allowed and even encouraged to have recourse afterwards to almost all sorts of rustic sports and amusing games : and this privilege none but Church attendants were allowed ; Puritans and Recusants were expressly excluded. The first half of the Sunday the people were exhorted to be very religious and devotional ; and the other half they were even encouraged, as we may justly say, to be as irreligious and profane as they wished to be. Sports, levity and profaneness usually go together. This was the mode which the abettors of this system deemed needful to promote Churchmanship, and professedly to promote religion, working, as it were, by the rule of contraries. The whole was no other than the work of darkness, under the guise of being the work of light : and yet learned and dignified, and in the world's estimation, respectable and religious men were its promoters,—bishops and priests and laymen, who made a shew of religion, and at times, very great shew, by observing festivals and fast days, and with as long and disfigured faces and sanctimonious gestures as any of the Pharisees of old, their forerunners and progenitors in the art of counterfeiting religion for selfish and ambitious purposes. It is enough to shew the character of the present party, to state the fact, that they admire and honour the promo-

ters of the book of Sports, far more than our renowned Reformers.

The *general* character of those who usually adopt this system, is quite sufficient to destroy its credit with all those who possess any measure of spiritual discrimination. Who are those, for instance, who generally fall in with the notion of baptismal regeneration?—the worldly-minded, the lovers of fashionable pleasures, the practically irreligious, such as think it quite enough to attend Church on Sunday, and then indulge in all the frivolities and amusements of the gay and giddy world. What has been usually the character of those candidates for orders, who have found no difficulty in adopting the views of such bishops as have most unwisely, and most unjustifiably made this tenet a test of orthodoxy? The easy and complying have been for the most part the thoughtless, the foppish, the gay, such as afforded no proofs of serious religion, no evidence of being influenced by the Divine Spirit, no symptoms of a spiritual state of mind, and whose whole conduct testified their unfitness for the sacred office, and who would clearly have never undertaken it, except for the sake of its honours and emoluments. These very facts, which cannot be justly denied by any acquainted with the state of things, are sufficient to shew the earthly, the human, the erroneous character of the notion; it being readily imbibed by such as are manifestly worldly in their spirit, and unrenewed in their minds. It might again be asked, what has been the general character of its strenuous supporters through the kingdom? It has been supported by such Clergy as were foxhunters, attendants at balls, and at other places of giddy amusement, and by such as have been justly suspect-

ed to be Pelagians, or Arians, or Socinians, or even Infidels. All these have been mostly warm advocates of baptismal regeneration, as well as abettors of the extravagant views respecting apostolical succession, and of the opus operatum of the Eucharist. Such in general have been the most rigid advocates of this system, the usual resort of all the worldly-minded religionists, as well as of those who are great admirers of what is formal, ceremonial and superstitious in a religious profession. It is the corrupt Protestant system in embryo, of which Popery is the full grown offspring. It is a device to soothe conscience and deceive men, by substituting the work of man in the place of the work of God; by pretending, after the manner of jugglers, to do by a ritual, what is not necessarily connected with it, and to convey by an ordinance, what is attainable only by a divine principle. It is a scheme by which God and mammon may be served, the one in the morning, and the other in the afternoon, and by which vital and experimental religion is rendered nugatory, by a great shew of outward reverence to the Almighty, and by over-scrupulous attention and superstitious regard, when that is deemed necessary, to the outward rites and forms of religion. It is the prostitution and profanation of some of the highest and most valuable truths; and therefore far worse, and more dangerous, (being especially more insinuating, when attended by a great shew of devotion) than an open denial of them. Manifest unbelief is not so mischievous as secret undermining of the Gospel. There is far less danger from rank but open Socinianism, than from slippery, tortuous and subtle Popery, under the guise of Protestantism.

The new working of this system has commenced now for some time. The *Quarterly Review* has advocated it to some extent. The *Christian Remembrancer* was set on foot purposely for its support and defence. The *British Critic* has become its advocate, especially of late. But the Coryphæus of the party, as a periodical, is the *British Magazine*, whose tactics are worthy only of the cause which it has undertaken to promote and defend. As for instance, when the Evangelical work of a dignitary or of a popular preacher is reviewed, the work on the whole is praised, and handsome things are said of the author; and some disapprobation perhaps of *some parts* is expressed in a very smooth and complimentary way. But if the book be published by a person of no great name, by a curate, or an individual scarcely known, it is sneered at, and treated with supercilious contempt, while it may contain the *very same* truths as the former. Ye imitators of Jesuits! Does the station of a writer, or the circumstance of his being not popular as a preacher, make any difference in the truths that are taught? The fact is, it is not quite safe for the interest of the party to denounce a person high in the Church, or a popular man. "They fear the people," as the Pharisees did. The object is to get into the good graces of the public; and to effect this a little Jesuitical manœuvre is necessary: for the party had sunk greatly, and had become very low in the estimation of the religious community. And I hope they will never rise, notwithstanding their tortuous efforts: for their rise will be the fall of genuine religion.

There are other things to be mentioned in the present way of promoting this system. There is a manifest change

in the language used, and in the feeling, at least as expressed, towards those generally who differ from them. The language in the last century was harsh and abusive, and the feeling shown was very hostile, and the spirit quite persecuting. But now, except in few instances, the language is very smooth, civil, and often complimentary, and every harshness is exceedingly blamed, as being very Antichristian. Even of Popery we must speak kindly now; and Popery is everywhere very good and productive of great benefits, except in Ireland, and when intrusive in this country. And as to the Evangelical clergy, who in the last century were undermining the Church, many of them are now very excellent, especially those high in the Church, and who are popular; though in a few things they are mistaken. Such is the changed tone of this party. Did it arise from a change of principles, it should be hailed with delight; but we have no evidence of this: on the contrary, we have proof enough, that in all the essentials of their system they are the same with their predecessors in the last and former centuries; and that on some points they go farther even than those before them, at least in the last age. The late Bishop Tomline, for instance, held doctrinal sentiments the same with the present party, and showed considerable dislike to those called 'Evangelical' among the clergy; and yet his views of Churchmanship were very moderate and truly Protestant. The same thing may be said of the present Bishop of Peterborough. His representation of the views of our Church on the subject is very satisfactory. But the present party, in addition to some doctrines savouring of Popery held by their predecessors, hold and maintain principles of the most exclusive

and illiberal character ; and yet they use a much more liberal language. Christian liberty is a high virtue, if grounded on right principles ; but if there be a mere display of it, if it be abundant in words only, and yet not consistent with the principles we hold, it is the hollow liberality of a Jesuit, employed to gain some selfish and ambitious purposes.

But the Oxford divines are the most unblushing abettors of this system. And yet there is a flinching and a tortuosity in their way of dealing with some things. They evidently *wish* to go so far as the Church of Rome does ; but they are not yet “venturesome” enough. Though bold on many points, and far bolder than any evidence can warrant ; yet they seem sometimes to lack boldness. “They fear the people.” This country is not yet ripe, and never will be ripe, I trust, for the full development of their system. They dare not yet deny salvation to those who are not in the Church of England. They generally go no farther than give them over to the uncovenanted mercies of God ; except, indeed, their teachers, who are given up to the condemnation of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. They frequently, however, hesitate at this, at least in words, whatever may be the sentiment entertained within. But though they deny not in so many words, but even in words allow, the possibility of salvation ; yet what they say in some parts amounts to a general denial. All, it seems, who are not Episcopalians, have no valid sacraments ; and it is through the sacraments, as it appears, that divine blessings are communicated. This is their doctrine, and I find nothing that amounts to a modification of it. There is a confusion on this subject that

would be amusing, were not the matter of too sacred a nature. The style is what is called rigmarole, being an imitation of the religious babblings of the Romish Synods; the arguments are mere "adaptations of apostolic words" to traditionary fictions; and the materials have been evidently borrowed from the Church of Rome.

Salvation in Scripture is never connected with the sacraments merely as sacraments, nor with any order of ministers, not even with the apostles; but with repentance, faith, love, and obedience. And to represent it as dependant on any such things, is to delude mankind, and spread the most ruinous error through the land. The object apparently is to make the minister the dispenser of divine blessings, and the only channel of communication between the Saviour and his people, and that for the purpose of getting influence, dominion, and importance, such as are possessed by the Romish priest. One thing more they want—they must teach the existence of purgatory, and pretend to deliver souls from it by prayers and fastings; then the system will be complete; and a noble engine of influence would it be! Purgatory is a Catholic truth no doubt, and the sooner they adopt it, the more Catholic truth they will teach! But it is no Bible truth, any more than that an "external mark" minister is the only channel through which divine blessings are conveyed. The best minister is no more than an instrument employed by God to preach his word and administer his ordinances; but the blessing is wholly dependant upon God himself; "the increase" under the Apostles themselves is said to have been from Him only. And it is the word received—it is penitence exercised and not professed in baptism—it is Christ believed in, and not received sacramentally—

Vide
Appendix,
F f.

it is the Saviour obeyed, loved, and served, and not preached by "an external mark" minister—these, and only these, are the things which entitle any to the promises of God in Christ.

The intellectual and sagacious Bishop *Butler* says, with Bp. Butler. great truth, "Mankind have, in all ages, been *greatly prone* to place their religion in peculiar positive *rites*, by way of equivalent for obedience to moral precepts;" and it may be added, for the exercise of heart repentance, for cordial faith in Christ, and love from the heart to God and the Saviour. Bishop *Hall*, in his sermon on the "Mischief of Faction;" Bp. Hall. has these striking words, which the Oxford divines would do well to attend to:—"This man is right, ye say; that man is not right; this, sound; that, rotten. And how so, dear Christians? What? For ceremonies and circumstances, for rockets, or rounds, or squares! Let me tell you, *He is right that hath a right heart towards his God, what forms soever he is for.* The kingdom of God doth not stand in meats and drinks, in stuffs or colours, or fashions, in noises and gestures; it stands in holiness and righteousness, in godliness and charity, in peace and obedience. And if we have happily attained to these, God doth not stand upon trifles and niceties of indifferences, and why should we?" The same excellent bishop, in his *Resolutions for Religion*, expresses the following just and liberal sentiments:—"An Indian convert, in the remotest part of the world, *believing in Christ, may, without relation to any Church whatever, be saved*; and a particular Church, being orthodox in the main principles of religion, upon matter of litigious contestation, flying off from some more eminent Church, under which it was ranked for order's sake, however it may be

faulty in an undue division, yet is *not hereby excluded from the capacity of salvation*; since such slight jars and unkindnesses in Churches can no more shut them out of a *common interest in Christ*, than the like quarrels of a Paul and Barnabas could keep either of them out of heaven." Whatever theories we may form, the good and wise bishop has stated what *facts* in our day most abundantly prove. Let us judge by our Saviour's rule—by "fruits," and we cannot hesitate to subscribe to the bishop's views, though very different from those of the Oxford Tracts. Their theory is baseless, wild, and extravagant; and it has no facts to substantiate it; but all facts are against it. It is like a castle built in the air, the creature of fancy, without any foundations, and invisible.

Bp.
Ridley.

I shall add the testimony of Bishop *Ridley*, one of the noblest martyrs on record, as given by Fox in his martyrology:—"The Holy Catholic or Universal Church, which is the communion of saints, the house of God, the spouse of Christ, the body of Christ, the pillar and stay of the truth,—this Church I believe according to the creed. This Church I do reverence and honour in the Lord. But the *rule* of this Church is *the word of God*;—the *guide* of this Church is the Holy Spirit;—the *marks* whereby this Church is known to me in this dark world are these: the *sincere preaching of God's HOLY WORD*—the *due administration of the sacraments*—*charity*—and *faithful observing of Ecclesiastical discipline*, ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF GOD. 'In times past,' saith Chrysostom, 'there were many ways to know the Church of Christ. But from the time that *heretics took hold of the Church*, it is *only known by the Scriptures*, which is the true Church. They have all things

in outward show which the true Church hath in truth ; wherefore, only by the Scriptures do we know which is the true Church.' That Church which is his body, and of which Christ is the head, standeth only on living stones and *true Christians*." And in another place he says :—" It is worthy to be noted what Lyra writeth upon Matthew : The Church, saith he, doth not stand in men by reason of their power and dignity, whether it be ecclesiastical or secular : for princes, and popes, and other superiors have been found to have fallen away from God. Therefore, the Church consisteth in those persons in whom is *true knowledge and confession of the faith and the truth*."

Acts and
Mon.
B. ix. c. 15.

Ibid.

One extract more shall be given, and that from what is called the Archbishop Cranmer's *Catechismus*, published in the year 1548, and it is this :—" This company of men, which *believeth* the Gospel, although here on earth they be severed in sundry places, yet they are called an Holy Catholic or Universal Church of Christ, that is to say, a multitude, a congregation, a company of Christian people. And this congregation receiveth of their head and Lord, Jesus Christ, all spiritual riches and gifts that pertain to the sanctification or making holy of the same body ; and these ghostly treasures *be common to the whole body*, and to every member of the same. For he that is unfeignedly a *faithful and godly man*, is made *partaker* of these benefits."

Abp.
Cranmer.

It is not on this point only that the men of the Oxford Tracts are wholly at variance with our Reformers, but on all the points that distinguish their system, especially with respect to the ground on which our Church is founded. While these men refer to the authority of tradition, and Catholic truth, and consent of Fathers, our Church acknowledges

none of them, but recognises the word of God alone. By recognising that *alone*, it virtually excludes tradition, Catholic truth, consent of Fathers, and all such vagaries, as well as decrees of councils. It in fact refers, expressly refers, the probation of every thing in faith and doctrine, as well as in rites and ceremonies, to the word of God, and to that *only*, as is quite evident from the contents of the 6th, 20th, 21st, and 34th Articles. Every doctrine must be "read therein, or proved thereby." No ceremony must be "repugnant to the word of God;" it is not said, to tradition, Catholic truth, or decrees of councils. There is not a word favourable to these things throughout the whole Articles; but much against them. As to councils, it is said expressly, that they "may err, and sometimes have erred," and that things ordained by them "have no strength nor authority, unless it may be declared, that they be *taken out of Holy Scripture*."

This is the fundamental principle of the Reformation and of the Church of England. Our Reformers had influence enough to have this principle laid down and distinctly acknowledged in her Articles; but they were prevented from carrying it out fully in all its bearings by the abettors of the Popish system of the Oxford Tracts. And this system has at every period done incalculable injury to our Church. Its advocates have ever been trying to Romanize the Church, and have ever resisted every attempt made to carry out its acknowledged principles into their legitimate extent. Many efforts have been made to do this, at different times; but they all failed through the mischievous influence of those in love with tradition, consent of Fathers, and decrees of councils; and their factious and schismatic conduct has been the main cause of almost all the Dissent in the kingdom. And

now they blame and condemn that very thing which their own Popish system has most undoubtedly produced. To make a crime and to condemn it, is something like the work of the evil one. How came the laudable attempts to introduce a moderate system, wholly corresponding with the fundamental principle of our Church, to fail in the reigns of Charles II. and William III.? It was wholly through the evil influence of those who maintained the Popish system of the Oxford Tracts; and their resistance in William's time rendered toleration necessary; and that toleration has nearly demolished the system that occasioned it. Thus the biter was bitten, and most deservedly so.

But the abettors of this system are entirely aliens to our Church, being the legitimate sons of the Romish communion. They are, in fact, intruders, and have no more right to be its members than the Socinians had to be the managers of Lady Hewley's bequests. And had we a Lord Chancellor, possessing jurisdiction over a matter of this kind, he might with as much justice exclude the influence of this party from the Church, as he did the Socinians from participating in Lady Hewley's charity; for their principles and sentiments are quite as foreign and opposed to those of our church, as the principles and sentiments of the Socinians are to those of the persons to whom this charitable lady bequeathed her property. And never will our Church be fully what it ought to be, according to her own acknowledged principles, until this party shall cease to influence her proceedings. They have not, indeed, been hitherto able, notwithstanding all their efforts, to change any of the doctrines of our Church; but they have greatly impeded the progress of her improvement. The Church has laid down the right principle—the Bible,

and the Bible alone, the test of doctrine, and the regulator of rites and ceremonies ; and she has nothing to do but to act according to this principle ; and were it not for the mischievous influence of such men as those of the Oxford Tracts, it could easily accommodate itself, according to such a wise plan as that of *Archbishop Usher*, to the altered circumstances of the times, so as to absorb almost all the Dissent in the land. But oh, no ! tradition, Catholic truth, consent of Fathers, decrees of councils, the superstitious and heathenish ceremonies of the primitive Church, must be regarded, consulted, revered, and almost adored ; and truth, and charity, union of faith and love, according to the infallible word of the Almighty, are to be cast aside as things comparatively of no importance ! And yet these men cry for unity. “Diotrephes now of late,” says the apostolic *Latimer*, “did ever harp upon unity, unity ; yea, Sir, quoth I, but in verity, not in Popery. Better is diversity, than unity in Popery.” Unity they may have to a great extent, only let them give up their vain traditions, their pretended Catholic truth, and their boasted consent of Fathers, all which our Church virtually disowns ; and let them relinquish their Popery, which it disclaims and abhors, as being the greatest and most mischievous imposture upon earth.

MISOPAPISTICUS.

ADDENDA :

STRICTURES ON THE TRANSLATIONS IN THE
“ RECORDS OF THE CHURCH.”

SINCE writing the foregoing Letters, the Author has had the opportunity of minutely examining the “Records of the Church,” published by the divines of the Oxford Tracts: and what follows, is the result of that examination.

These “Records,” are a series distinct from the Tracts, and contain for the most part, translations of some of the works of the early Fathers, such as the epistles of Ignatius, and some portions of Justin, Irenæus, Tertullian and others. The epistles of Clement, Polycarp, and Barnabas, are passed over, and also the works of Hermas. The obvious suspicion in this matter, is, that Clement and Polycarp do not exactly suit the views and purposes of these divines, and that Barnabas and Hermas contain too many strange and absurd things, to allow of a hope of their being well received by the public. It may do to make a quotation now and then from them, as is done in some of the Tracts, and to announce it, as containing the sentiment of an apostolic Father, with the view of confirming some Catholic truth, or rather, some Catholic error; but to bring the whole of their writings before the public

The
Records
of the
Church.

Ignatius. in the present day, would be rather hazardous. Even Ignatius, the great hero of these divines, on whose shoulders, almost alone, rests the whole weight of extravagant high churchmanship for the two first centuries, is not allowed to come abroad, without being polished and altered. He has been subjected to a Procrustean process: what is curt, has been extended; and what is too long, has been cut off. And another sort of operation has been adopted; some strong expressions have been softened and weakened; and others, rather too feeble, have been made stronger. Of these different processes, some examples shall presently be given, and an opportunity will also be taken of exhibiting some of the curious and strange notions of Ignatius, and of pointing out the rhapsodical character of his writings.

Texts and
Versions of
Ignatius.

Abp.
Usher.

Vossius.

There is a very just ground of complaint against these translators, that they have not told us what *text* they have adopted in these epistles; for there are various texts, widely differing in very many instances, exhibiting discrepancies to an extent greater than those of any other early writings. Archbishop *Usher* informs us, that there had been edited, before his time, *two Greek* texts of Ignatius, and *two Latin* versions; and the text he adopts differs from both. *Vossius*, whose edition was posterior to that of *Usher*, published for the most part what is called the *Florentine Text*, which varies greatly from that adopted by the Archbishop, and is accompanied by a Latin version, as that of that Archbishop is; but in both instances, the versions differ from the texts, and from each other. There have not been perhaps in any other case, such examples of varieties and discrepancies, as in the

texts of Usher and Vossius. There are in the former, many *pages* that are wanting in the latter; and not only so, but the very same sentences are differently worded. Usher's text, no doubt, has many interpolations; and yet it often exhibits the sense much clearer, or it gives a much better sense than that of Vossius. There have been later editions; one especially by *Cotelerius*, with which I am not acquainted. Archbishop *Wake*, in his translation, refers to it often; but it appears that his improvement of the text is neither extensive nor very important. The Archbishop's translation, agrees mostly with Vossius's text; and it is followed to a great extent by these writers in the "Records of the Church." But they seem to depart from it very often needlessly, and frequently to adhere to it when it might be easily improved. The superiority, no doubt, as a whole, belongs to that of the Archbishop; it being far plainer, more faithful, and much more intelligible. There is sometimes in the renderings of these divines, a taint of mysticism, a degree of oddity, which renders the meaning obscure and mysterious.

Abp.
Wake.

Nothing is more evident than the attempt made by these writers to add importance to Ignatius and his writings. Hence they have prefixed to each epistle, this sentence: "Epistle of Ignatius, the friend of St. Peter and St. John, and bishop of Antioch, on his way to martyrdom."

The designed object is quite obvious: it is to prepossess the reader in favour of the contents of the epistles. The author is announced as the "friend" of two eminent apostles, as "bishop of Antioch, and being on his way to martyrdom." That he was on his way to martyrdom, is

evident from his epistles ; but not, that he was the friend of the apostles, or the bishop of Antioch. But he must be connected with inspired men, that people may be led gradually to believe, that he himself was also inspired ! The unremitting effort of these writers, in common with Papists, is to introduce something as divine, beside the Scriptures,—a clear proof that they have purposes to answer, and ends to gain, which the Bible does not contemplate, nor approve, nor sanction.

The first epistle given in these “Records,” is that to the *Ephesians*. The salutation, as rendered by these writers, is this :—

Epistle
to the
Ephesians.

“Ignatius, also called Theophorus, to her who is blessed in the greatness and fulness of God the Father ; to the predestinate before all worlds, to be ever in marvellous glory unchangeable, united and elect through the true passion, through the will of the Father, and Jesus Christ our God ; to the truly beatified Church, which is in Ephesus of Asia, all health in Jesus Christ, and in unspotted grace.” The words, “who is blessed in the greatness, &c.” are rendered by *Wake* more intelligibly thus : “being blessed *through* the greatness,” &c. the preposition, *er*, having constantly this meaning in Ignatius, being even twice so rendered in this very passage. “United and elect,” are connected here with “glory ;” but what sense they make, it is not easy to see. *Wake* follows another copy, and connects them with the “Church,” and thus some sort of meaning is preserved. But leaving the translators, what sense can we make of the original ? Let any one examine the dependence which one part has on another, and trace the connection, and he will inevitably find, that

the whole partakes much of the character of rhapsody. It sounds like something true and correct, and is in a scriptural strain; but when the meaning is sought after, very little can be found: it is sound, and hardly any thing more—"blessed in the greatness,—marvellous glory, united and elect,—all health in unspotted grace!" These expressions are more like the rant of an enthusiast than anything else. Similar to this in style is the salutation in most of the Epistles; in some shorter and in others longer, but in all quite as incoherent. The first paragraph after the salutation, is thus rendered:—

"I welcome in God's behalf that well-beloved name, which you have attained in all righteousness, (ὃ κεκτησθε φουσεὶ δικαίᾳ) according to the faith and love which is in Jesus Christ our Saviour, for that being followers of God, and kindling the inward flame by the blood of God, you have perfectly accomplished the work that belonged to you, (το συγγενικὸν ἐργον)."

Sect. i.

The first Greek sentence that is put in, is not correctly rendered; nor is the last. The one in fact explains the other. The first is, "Which you have possessed by just nature;" and the last means, "a native," or "congenial work." And in the expression "thy much-beloved name," (το πολὺ ἀγαπητὸν σου ὄνομα) there is an evident allusion to the name of the city, Ephesus, which means "desirable," as it is remarked by Usher and others. This is the name "which they possessed by just nature." And the latter part should be thus rendered:—"and having rekindled (αναζωπυρῆσαντες) by the blood of God a work that is natural," or "native to you, you have perfectly accomplished it." This no doubt is the meaning of the passage, whatever may be thought of its divinity.

Sect. 9. The following sentence, *σχοινῷ χρημενοὶ τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ*, translated thus by Wake, "using the Holy Ghost as the rope," seems evidently to have appeared too low, and perhaps something worse, as it really is, to these divines, to be literally rendered: they have therefore polished it a little and rendered it thus;—"With the Holy Ghost as the line by which to ascend." In the same section we meet with a similar attempt to smooth down ruggedness, and set forth the meaning with more propriety, though not very correctly:—"Ye therefore, with all the companions of your way, are full of God, of his spiritual temple, of Christ, of the Holy one." Literally rendered, the passage is this:—"Ye are therefore even all fellow-travellers, (*εστε ουν και συνοδοι παντες*) God-bearers, and temple-bearers, Christ-bearers, the Holy One-bearers," -- *θεοφοροι και ναοφοροι, Χριστοφοροι, αγιοφοροι*. However difficult it may be to find terms suitable to convey the meaning of these words, it is evident that being "full of God," and especially "of his spiritual temple," (what does it mean?) is not suitable language, it being stronger than the original, which itself is sufficiently so.

Sect. 14. What a needless departure from a literal rendering occurs in the following sentence:—"No man, possessing a true faith, goes wrong; neither does he who has charity, hate any." The words, "true,—goes wrong,—charity," are all improper: the first is not in the text, the second is not a correct rendering, and the third is an obsolete word for the term here used. The sentence is literally this;—"No one, professing faith, sinneth (*αμαρτανει*); nor does he, who possesseth love, hate." When a literal rendering is practicable, being both plain and intelligible.

to seek out another betokens either a want of discrimination, or a desire to obtain countenance to some party views.

In the Epistle to the Magnesians, some are alluded to who disregarded the Bishop. The sentence is,—*χωρὶς δὲ αὐτοῦ πάντα πράσσουσιν*,—"but they do all things without him." This is the literal rendering, and as given by *Wake*, and is plain and intelligible enough: but it does not suit these divines; for they must have something that sounds more like Catholic truth, and therefore they word it thus;—"yet they do all without consideration of the office." The office is the great matter, it seems, be the man what he may, good, bad, or indifferent. To sink the man in the office has ever been the attempt of those who are fond of irresponsible power, of lordship, and tyranny. When a person performs the duties of his office, his office gives sanction and authority to his deeds: but when he departs from these duties, he loses that sanction, desecrates his office, and forfeits its rights. The contrary supposition is quite monstrous. To hold that a man's office justifies what is wrong, or sanctions whatever he may do, is a doctrine that opens all the floodgates of oppression and injustice. It amounts in fact to nothing less than this,—to claim the sanction of God for the deeds of the devil. It was a leaning to this sort of doctrine, that probably occasioned the introduction of the word "office," into the sentence above quoted. Ignatius in this instance is too short for the Procrustean bed of these divines: he is therefore lengthened; and this lengthened part may serve some party purpose on some future occasions, and be quoted as a portion of Ignatius himself. This is the

Epis. to the
Magnes.
Sect. 4.

way in which errors have sometimes been originated, and afterwards perpetuated. A new piece has been put to an original author, and that has afterwards been referred to, as if it had been his own.

Ibid.
Sect. 6.

The following paragraph is quoted from the same Epistle :—"The Bishop holding presidency over you, in the place of God; and the Presbyters in the place of the council of the apostles; and the Deacons, my well-beloved, entrusted with the service of Jesus Christ." There are two needless departures from *Wake's* translation in this passage. "Holding presidency over you," (*προκαθήμενον*), is put for the plain and literal expression, "presiding;" and "service" is substituted for "ministry." The reason for the last change cannot well be conjectured; but as to the first, some plea may be made for it; for it sounds fuller, more lordly, and more authoritative. Passing by, however, these things, let us attend to the strange notions of Ignatius himself. The Bishop in the place of God! So that he is higher than the apostles,—for those who stood on an equality with them were the presbyters: and those "entrusted with the ministry of Christ" were the Deacons. The Bishop presides, the Presbyters form the Sanhedrim, (*συνηδριον* is the term used,) and the Deacons are the efficient ministers or "the working clergy"! This is the view of things which he gives throughout his epistles, with scarcely any difference. The deacons are represented as more especially the active ministers of the Gospel, the Presbyters as the Cardinals in conclave, and the Bishop as the infallible Pope! without whom nothing was to be done, and nothing was to appear even "rational" to them, as we shall presently see! Let these epistles be

deemed genuine or not, they clearly contain many things wholly inconsistent with the primitive state of the Church, according to all other documents that we have respecting it. There is only one of two things that must be admitted as to Ignatius—he is either a false witness, or his writings have been grossly changed and perverted in after ages. The latter is the most probable supposition. There were complaints very early of this shameful work being done: and attempts were made on some of the inspired writings; but their spread, their being so much known, prevented such attempts from being successful. But in case of such works as those of Ignatius, they being confined to a few, the attempt was more feasible.

In the very same section of the same epistle, we meet with a sentence so translated, as if it had been done by the mystics; and it is the following:—"Be ye made one, in the Bishop, and in the superiors, for an example and lesson of incorruption." *Wake's* translation contains some meaning, which this can hardly be said to have, and is as follows,—“Be ye united to your Bishop and those who preside over you, to be your pattern and direction in the way to immortality.”

Ibid.
Sect. 6.

We come next to another Procrustean process, by which an addition is made, and also a part cut off. The sentence is this:—"Neither seek ye gratification in any thing to your own selfish judgment." Would any one suppose that the literal rendering, and the one given by *Wake* is the following? "Neither endeavour to let any thing appear rational, (*ευλογον*) to yourselves apart;" that is, from the Bishop mentioned in the preceding sentence. "Selfish" is put in for the purpose of lengthen-

Ibid.
Sect. 7.

ing, and "rational" is cut off for the purpose of shortening the sentence: and being thus adjusted and made suitable, it may now be adopted as containing what condemns the exercise of private judgment. As now framed, it stamps private judgment at once as "selfish"; and by cutting off the word "rational," it ceases to partake of its original extravagance. The short limb has been lengthened, and the long one has had a part lopped off. These divines are exceedingly provident, and very dexterous. They prepare instruments for themselves, and secure Ignatius from just reflections. But what a popish sentiment is here announced! To hold that nothing should appear "rational" to us, but what the Bishop approves, is at once to make a pope of him. Adopt such a sentiment as this, and you must at once become a papist, a downright member of the Romish Church, so deluded as to make a surrender, to a fallible and imperfect mortal, of a gift which God has granted to every one for his own use. Where is there anything of this kind in the divine word? "Judge ye what I say," is what an inspired Apostle directed his people to do; but Ignatius says, 'Let the bishop judge and determine every thing for you.' Bellarmine himself, who compares the people to Job's "asses feeding beside the oxen," the priests, does not go beyond this.

Epistle
to the
Trallians.
Sect. 3,

The next example presents another mode of operation, which is that of lowering the meaning of terms, that the extravagance of the author may not come to light. The only instance of this kind that shall now be adduced is the following passage in the Epistle to the Trallians:—"Likewise let all men give heed to the deacons as to Jesus Christ," &c. The original words are these:—*Ὁμοίως πάντες*

εντρεπισθωσαν τους διακονους ως Ιησυν Χριστον. To "give heed to," is not the meaning of the verb here used, especially when it is followed, as it is here, by an accusative case. It is rendered "revereantur" in the latin version given by *Usher*, and also in that given by *Vossius*: and it is rendered "reverence," by *Wake*, and no doubt correctly.

The foregoing instances of perverted renderings from the Epistles of Ignatius, form but a very small portion of what might be adduced. Only three epistles out of the seven have been at all referred to; and many more instances of a similar kind might be adduced even from them. But enough surely has been brought forward to convince every impartial reader, that these divines are not to be trusted as translators, and that they are wholly undeserving of the public confidence. A still stronger proof of their want of faithfulness will be afforded by instances from the works of Justin, Irenæus, and Tertullian. Prepossessions have amazing influence; they often warp the judgment in a way almost incredible. Were it not so, it would be very difficult to screen these writers from the charge of intentional dishonesty.

A free translation, which embodies the meaning of the original, is on ordinary subjects no doubt the best. But then it should contain the whole of the original and no more than the whole. It should embrace the meaning of the author, the whole meaning, and no more than his meaning. But there are in almost every author some parts, in which a free translation, embodying correctly and fully his meaning, can hardly be made, especially when those parts contain matters of dispute. In such cases, the best translation is the most literal that can be

made, provided it be intelligible. No other mode of dering can be satisfactory, except accompanied with original, or with its literal rendering. These translations are in this respect exceedingly faulty. They give a translation of parts that ought to be literally rendered and which might easily be so rendered: and thereby manage to introduce a meaning which the original not contain. This is especially their mode of proceeding in the documents which I am going now to notice. not so much the procrustean process that they adopt, a operation by which the original meaning is evaded, another introduced in its place. This is done in a instances with astonishing art and dexterity, as we presently see. The first extracts that shall be noticed, those from

JUSTIN MARTYR.

What refers to Baptism and the Lord's Supper in Justin's first apology, is given in No. 13 of the "Record the Church." The translation in the "Records" shall first set down, and then the literal rendering. The following passage is in the 61st section:—

"We will state in what manner we are created by Christ, and have dedicated ourselves to God."

Literally rendered it is this:—

Apol. i.
Sect. 61.

"We will state in what manner, we, having been renewed through Christ, have dedicated ourselves to God."

The difference may not appear to a cursory observer to be much; but there is a material difference. The "dedication," and being "made new," (*καινοποιηθεντες*), do appear so distinct and separate in the translation of "

Records," as in the original. The renewal is the *previous qualification* of such as dedicate themselves to God. The next passage is from the same section :—

" For they are then washed in that water in the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit."

Sect. 61.

The following is the literal translation :—

" For in the name of the Father of the Universe and Lord God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, they then undergo the washing which is by water."

By what authority have they changed the order of these words, *πατρος των ολων και δεσποτου Θεου* ? It is the usual phraseology of Justin ; and it had a peculiar meaning and intention, which these divines should have known or remembered. "The Father of the universe," or the Creator of all things, was adopted designedly in opposition to the sentiments of the heretics. The original of what they have rendered, " they are then washed in that water," is this : *το εν τω υδατι τότε λουτρον ποιουνται* ; the literal rendering of which is given above. Let the reader notice the word *λουτρον*, washing. It can have no meaning but washing here, and it ought to be so rendered in all the subsequent parts of the Apology. When a passage occurs which gives a determinate meaning to a word, it should have that meaning, until another passage be found, which may clearly require that another should be attached to it. It is from the same section that the following quotation is made :—

λουτρον.

" He who leads him to be washed in the laver of baptism, saying this (name) only over him," &c.

Sect. 61.

The literal rendering is this :—

“This (name) only we say over him, when we lead him, that is to be washed, into the washing,” &c.

The word “baptism,” is not in the original; and the word “laver,” is an improper rendering. To be “washed in the laver,” is not the meaning of the words, which are these, *τουτον λουομενον αγοντες επι το λουτρον*. Leading or introducing into the washing is clearly what is meant. And why is the person changed, “he,” instead of “we”? Is it for the purpose of directing the reader’s attention to the minister? Everything in these writers bears the same way. Their polar star is the priest, to which they never fail to turn, even when there is no reason for doing so. I quote still from the same section :—

“And he who is so illuminated is baptized also,” &c.

It should be thus rendered :—

“And the illuminated is washed also,” &c.

The particle “so,” is needlessly inserted; and the word “baptized,” is without any reason put for “washed.” The original is this; *και ο φωτιζομενος λουεται*. The next sentence is from another section :—

“We then, after having so washed him who hath expressed his conviction, and professes the faith, lead him to the brethren, where they are gathered together, to make common prayers with great earnestness, both for themselves, and for him who is now illuminated.”

Sect. 65.

The literal rendering is plainly this :—

“Then we, after having thus washed him that hath been persuaded and given his consent, lead him to those called brethren, where they are assembled, about to join fervently in common prayers for themselves and the illuminated.”

There are no less than three *false* renderings in this passage : and all seem to have arisen from an attempt to favour certain views. The expression, *τον πεπεισμενον*, is not, "him who hath expressed his conviction," but, "him who hath been persuaded." The same word is used in the 61st section, with reference to the same character, and exactly in this sense. And the word, *συγκατατεθειμενον*, means not him "who professes the faith," but, "who has given his consent," that is, to be baptized. The object of these writers manifestly is, to make out that there was, at this early time of the church, a formal public profession of faith made by the candidate, which afterwards became evidently the practice. Justin gives no idea of this in this passage : but these translators constrain him to say what he never said, to speak of a practice which had no existence in his time. But there is yet a worse perversion : the particle "now," is put in, and placed before illuminated, which conveys an idea wholly inconsistent with the sentiments expressed by Justin. In a former passage he tells us the reason why "washing is called illumination," that is, because "those are in mind illuminated, who," as he says, "learn these things," namely, the truths taught by the Christians. But the design of this "now," that is put in by these translators, is to shew, that they are said to be illuminated, because they had been washed or baptized. What will not men, blinded by prepossessions, or as *Cecil* says, "magnetized by prejudices," be led to do in order to advance their own views, and promote their own schemes ! The following passages refer to the Lord's Supper :—

Sect. 61.

"Of the bread that has been blessed," &c.

Sect. 65.

Literally :—

“ Of the bread that has been thanked for, (ευχαριστηθεντος.)”

Sect. 66. “ The food which is blessed.”

Literally :—

“ The food that has been thanked for, (ευχαριστηθεισαν.)”

Justin never mentions the elements as having been blessed or consecrated. Blessing or thanking God for them as the gifts of his bountiful Providence is what he mentions everywhere. And after this thanksgiving, they were taken in commemoration of the death of the Saviour.

On the same subject are the following passages :—

Sect. 67. “ Our head in like manner offers up prayers and praises.”

It should be rendered thus :—

“ Our president (ὁ πρεσβυτης) in like-manner offers up prayers and thanksgivings, (ευχαριστίας.)”

Sect. 67. “ The consecrated elements are then distributed and received by every one.”

* Literally thus :—

“ Then a distribution is made, and a reception by each, of the things thanked for, (απο των ευχαριστηθεντων.)”

If thanksgiving for gifts bestowed is what is meant by consecration, then the rendering is justifiable : but this is not the case. Justin is here, as in former instances, made to say what he never said.

The extracts which next follow, are made from a Letter to Diognetus, which is ascribed to Justin, but with no sufficient reason. It is given in No. 15 of the Records :—

Letter to
Diognetus.
Sect. 5. “ The truths which they hold result not from the busy ingenuities of human thought; the councils of men in them possess no champion.”

What may be viewed as a literal rendering is this :—

“ This has not been declared to them for instruction, through any contrivance or ingenuity of inquisitive men ; nor do they, as some, patronize any human doctrine.”

It is difficult to know where the word “ truths ” has been found, it not being in the passage. The mode of living adopted by the Christians is what is spoken of in the immediate preceding context. Something seems to have been deemed necessary to bear on what those writers consider to be the “ busy ingenuities of human thought ” in the present day. The word “ champion,” has not been introduced, it may be, without some intention. The practice of some Christians who advocate the sentiments of some eminent individuals, (not because they were *their* sentiments, but those taught as they conceive in the Bible,) in assuming their names, or allowing themselves to be called after them, has been strongly denounced by these writers, and represented as being almost a proof of apostacy. Such a view is indeed consistent with their usual mode of magnifying what is little, and of nihilizing what is great. It is not improbable that a thought of this kind had something to do with the framing of this sentence. And the expression, “ the councils of men,” instead of “ human doctrine,” (*δογματος ανθρωπινου*) has apparently been introduced for the purpose of screening themselves. The following is from the same letter :—

“ What man, who hath been taught aright, and nurtured in the kindly word, does not feel an increasing desire clearly to know those things, which by the Word were directly spoken to the disciples, and which he manifested fully to them ? ”

The following is a literal rendering :—

“ Who that hath been rightly taught and begotten by the kindly word, does not seek clearly to learn the things which have been manifestly shewn by the Word to the disciples, to whom the Word, having appeared, speaking openly, has manifested them ? ”

There are here at least two mistakes, or rather perverted renderings. The word *γεννηθεις*, born, or “ begotten,” is most strangely translated, “ nurtured.” The idea that a person is to be begotten or born again by any other means than by baptism, is to be discountenanced at all risks ! And *φανερως*, as it seems, is “ directly,” and not “ manifestly ” or clearly. The notion that something was more especially or “ directly ” addressed to the disciples than to any else, must be propagated. Whether this was the fact or not, is not the question : but whether it was contemplated by the writer of this passage. This, most clearly, was not the case. Have these divines found out some new meanings for words by means of tradition or Catholic truth ? or have they been taking lessons of the Jesuits, and are they now practising what they have learnt ? The next sentence is from the same section : —

Sect. 11. “ You shall be taught the truths which the Word communicates by those whom he chooses in his own good time.”

The literal rendering is as follows :—

“ You shall know the things, which the Word communicates, by whom he wills, when he pleases, *δι' ὃν βουλεται, οτι θελει.* ”

No sentence could be more artfully framed than the above, so as to elude the meaning of the original, and yet

seemingly to contain it. Were it punctuated aright, the sense would be seen : but the points being left out, a false meaning is conveyed to the reader. The words, “ by those,” &c. appear now to be connected with “ communicates,” while they ought to be with “ taught.” Then the word “ chooses,” is put for “ wills,” *βουλεται*, and “ whom he chooses,” instead of, “ by whom he wills.” The whole purpose seems to be to make the sentence favourable to the notion of an “ external-mark minister,” with which it has no connection whatever. From the same Letter is the following passage :—

“ Knowledge is not that which brings death, but disobedience in the way of gaining it.”

The literal rendering is this :—

Sect. 12.

“ (The tree) of knowledge does not destroy ; but disobedience destroys,—(*αναιρει*, kills.)”

The ruling passion appears here very strong. According to the Oxford new meaning of words, derived no doubt from tradition, Catholic truth and consent of Fathers, the phrase, *η παρακοη αναιρει*, disobedience destroys, is to be translated, “ disobedience in the way of gaining it !” There is an import in the words, “ in the way of gaining it,” which the uninitiated do not perhaps understand. But they who are acquainted with the system will easily comprehend what it means. The “ way of gaining” knowledge, is by tradition, the teaching of the Church, and through the lineal descendants of the Apostles ! and knowledge not gained in this way brings death ! If there be any that really believe this, the only thing that can be said, is, that they are objects of pity and almost of derision, being clearly deluded, and under the influence

of the wildest fancies. But to attach such a notion to this passage, is to falsify its meaning, and delude the public. The next extracts shall be from

IRENÆUS.

There are in No. 14. of "the Records," translations of two chapters in the first book of Irenæus against the heretics. They are the second and third chapters. These authors give no references. Is it because they are not willing that what they do should be examined? The second chapter, which contains what may be called the creed of Irenæus, is rendered tolerably well, except the last part, which is not done unfaithfully, but in a very clumsy manner. There is indeed an expression which can hardly be deemed correct. They have rendered *ελασφημους των ανθρωπων*, "profane men," instead of "blasphemers" or "slanderrers of men." The rendering of the third chapter shews most clearly "the cloven foot." Every thing is done to countenance tradition, and to clothe with lordship and authority the ministerial character; which the following instances will sufficiently shew:—

Irenæus,
his
Creed.

Lib. i.
Cap. 3.

"This is the message and this is the faith."

Which should be,

"This is the preaching (*το κηρυγμα*), and this is the faith."

The known unfriendliness of these divines to preaching accounts for this change of "preaching" into a "message." To depreciate preaching, and to exalt prayers and the sacraments, appear evidently to be their great object throughout their Tracts. For they maintain, that "the Sacraments, not preaching, are the sources of divine

grace," forgetting, or not believing, what St. Paul says, that the first grace, that by which we are saved, even faith, cometh by hearing; and hearing is by the means of preaching. One of the peculiarities of the Gospel is preaching; it is thereby distinguished from the Mosaic dispensation, and from all systems of heathenism. There was preaching, it is true, in some measure under the law; but sacrifices and prayers form the principal part. And it is remarkable that preaching made no part of the religious services of the pagans. "The worship of the gods," says Dr. Adam, in his *Roman Antiquities*, p. 293, "consisted chiefly in prayers, vows and sacrifices:" and he adds, "No act of religious worship was performed without prayer: *the words used were thought of the greatest importance.*" Is it the object of these divines to ceremonialize the Gospel, or to heathenize it? During the dark ages, when popery was rampant, there was very little preaching. True religion and preaching live and die together. Formalists and the self-righteous have ever preferred prayers to preaching. But I proceed to quote the following sentence:—

"And (which the church,) preaches, teaches, hands down to posterity, as harmoniously as though she had but one mouth."

Cap. 3.

The following is the literal rendering:—

"And (the church,) harmoniously preaches, teaches and delivers, (*παράδωσιν*,) these things, as if she possessed but one mouth."

To give the idea of handing down to posterity to the verb here used, is by no means warrantable. It means to deliver any thing to another,—to convey in this instance,

the truths of the Gospel to others, not to posterity, but to those living at the time. To deliver instruction, is to convey or communicate it : and this idea is included in the verb and in the noun, *παράδοσις*,—tradition, derived from it. Tradition, according to Irenæus, is the truth conveyed by preaching, previously received, and delivered as such to others. So that the proper idea of the word is the very reverse of what is given in this translation ; it is to deliver to others what had been previously received, and not to hand it down to posterity. The only respect in which tradition differs from preaching, is this, that it includes the idea of a previous reception : but the two words are used often by Irenæus as meaning the same thing. The following sentence betrays the same sort of leaning towards popish views :—

Cap. 3. “ There is no difference of faith or tradition, whether in the churches of Germany,” &c.

The literal translation is as follows :—

“ And neither the Churches, founded in Germany, have otherwise believed, or have otherwise delivered, (*ἄλλως παραδιδόασιν*,)” or, as the perfect tense is often rendered by the present, “ otherwise believe, or otherwise deliver.”

To get in the word, tradition, which possesses a sort of magic to papists and such as are like them, the form of the sentence has been completely changed, while the literal rendering is quite as intelligible. The word, tradition, however, is of so much consequence, that it must be brought in, whenever the least occasion is offered. Authority and lordship too possess similar attractions, as the following renderings shew :

“ Among the rulers of the Church,” &c.

Cap. 3.

“ For no one is above his master.”

These two sentences are thus correctly rendered :—

“ Among those who preside (*προεστωτων*) in the Churches.”

“ For no one is above the teacher, (*διδασκαλον*).”

Now these foregoing instances from Irenæus occur within the space of twenty lines ; for the whole chapter is no more. To spread the truth and promote its interest, is of course the professed object of these writers : but they adopt very singular means for the purpose. To give extracts from the Fathers, and translate them according to their own views, and inconsistently with those of the original authors, is certainly a strange sort of proceeding ; but however strange it may be, it has always been the same : it is like popery, *semper idem*. It is a proceeding which the admirers of tradition and advocates of Catholic truth, have invariably adopted. There are apes of Jesuits, as well as apes of Epictetus. The last extracts that shall now be noticed are those from

TERTULLIAN.

A short historical account of Tertullian is given in No. 17 of “ the Records,” together with some extracts from his writings. The heading of the Tract is, “ Tertullian’s Account of the Rule of faith.” And the work, from which quotations are made, may be called, it is said, in English, “ The Church’s plea (or demur,) against dissenters.” The original title of the Work is not given, nor any direct reference to the works of Tertullian. But why is the title concealed ? *Why* is this done ? These

writers, it seems, are resolved to be consistent in every thing, to carry on their objects in the same unfair and dishonest way,—mangling, adding to, lopping off, perverting, concealing,—the usual trade of Jesuits! But *why* is the title not given? Is it because it would not suit the purpose for which the extracts are made? This is *evidently* the reason; for in the notes which they give, they represent those against whom Tertullian wrote, as “separatists,” while the expressed object of his treatise was to refute the *heretics*. The title of his work is, *Liber de præscriptionibus Hæreticorum*. It is not of separation from the Church as a community that he speaks, but of separation from the truth, as taught in the Scriptures, and as continued according to what he maintains, to be taught by the universal Church. And the points he mentions in his rule of faith, are as purely taught by all our orthodox Dissenters, as by these divines.

The first extract given is from the ninth section, in which the subject is not commenced, but carried on: and great ingenuity is exercised to make it appear different from what it really is. Tertullian maintains against the heretics that the Scriptures contain all that we need to know, and that we ought to be satisfied with them without further inquiries. His very words are the following, which of course are not given by these divines:—

Nobis curiositate opus non est, post Christum Jesum; nec inquisitione, post evangelium. Cum credimus, nihil desideramus ultra credere: Hoc enim prius credimus, non esse quod ultra credere debemus.—“We have no need of a searching curiosity, after (we know) Christ Jesus; nor of enquiring, after (we know) the Gospel. When we believe,

we desire to believe nothing further, for this we first believe, that there is not any thing which we ought further to believe. Sect. 8.

Then in the following section he notices this saying,—
 “Seek and ye shall find,” which the heretics pleaded in favour of their endless enquiries ; and he answers them by saying, that it was a command to the Jews in our Saviour’s time, and not to Christians in general. But in the next section, where the extract in the “Records” begins, he admits its application, and argues against their inferences. Sect. 9.

The real state of the question between Tertullian and the heretics is not specified by these writers : but there is an evident effort made to keep it out of sight. The mode of rendering, the selection of parts and the notes, seem all to have been intended for the very purpose of concealing the real case, and of misrepresenting the whole matter. The heretics with whom Tertullian contended, were the heretics of Irenæus, commonly called the Gnostics, who denied various portions of the Scripture, pretended to receive some, and perverted almost the whole. The contest with them was about the very essentials of truth, and not about regulations of Church discipline ; for they had, at least some of them, their bishops, presbyters and deacons, according to Tertullian, as well as the orthodox. See Sect. 41.
 The rule of faith (*Regula fidei*) which he adduces, is a summary of the fundamental articles of faith, (apostolical succession is unfortunately left out,) substantially the same with that given by Irenæus, but worded and arranged very differently. Sect. 13.
 This rule of faith is as fully believed by all orthodox dissenters in the present day as by these divines. By this summary of truth, truly alleged no

doubt by Tertullian, to be received and embraced by the universal Church in his day, even from the time of the Apostles, he attempted to prove the heretics wrong and to overturn their system ; which as an argument and a proof was sufficient for the purpose. But strange to say, by this same rule of faith, which is substantially believed and embraced by all orthodox separatists from the Church, the Oxford Divines now attempt to prove them wrong and confute their opinions !

But it may probably be said, that the *mode* in which it has been derived is the important matter. Though the creed is really and substantially believed and acknowledged ; yet they have not received it through a right channel. This indeed is the only ground that can be taken. The rule of faith is known and believed, the Bible too is fully admitted, and all fundamental articles, at least according to Tertullian's creed as well as that of Irenæus, are acknowledged and embraced ; and there is nothing mentioned by Tertullian, which belongs to the present separatists in common with the heretics of his day, except it be, that they have not received the main truths regularly through the Church from the apostles. This is the only point on which the application is justifiable. Now it so happens, that these very men, according to their own confession, are in this respect, exactly in the same predicament with the separatists. In a note to the third extract, they say this, " Since his (Tertullian's) time, the Church has *gone wrong*." If the Church has gone wrong, how has the rule of faith been recovered ? Not by apostolical succession, for that conveys only orders, and not the rule of faith, which the church, " going wrong," must have

lost, at least in a measure : for otherwise it could not have gone wrong. If it be said, that the rule of faith was never lost in any degree, so it may be said of the Bible as a professed and acknowledged document. But notwithstanding all this, the Church *had* gone wrong ! And how has the rule of faith been recovered ? No doubt in a way similar to that by which the separatists have found and obtained it, that is, by means of the Bible and of books,—a safer mode of transmission than any human teaching. The Church had gone wrong, and it would have never become right again, had it not been for the Bible, the book of God, the precious word of inspiration. How did the Church of England become right in the essentials of faith at the Reformation ? By tradition, by the rule of faith, by apostolical succession ? Surely not : but by means of the Bible, and by the perusal of such writings as were consistent with, and embodied the grand and main doctrines of the Bible,—yea, of such writings as were condemned by the Catholic Church.

This is not the place to criticise the sentiments of Tertullian : but these authors misrepresent him, when they say in a note to the third extract, that he “ does not mean to decry arguing from Scripture.” He *does* mean to do so most distinctly with respect to the heretics. His words are,—*Ergo non ad scripturas provocandum est*—“Therefore an appeal to the Scriptures is not to be made.” Sect. 19. As to his mode of confuting the heretics, it was to a certain extent legitimate, and peculiar as to time : but he carried his principle too far, and made it too exclusive. It was *one* way of undermining their system ; but ought not to have been adopted to the exclusion of the *best* way,

Irenæus.
and
Tertullian.

an appeal to Scripture. Let those who advocate his sentiments, reconcile his theory in his younger days with his practice in his advanced years, and also with the practice of Irenæus, the object of whose great work was principally to confute the same heretics *by an appeal to Scripture*. Let those who advocate the consent of Fathers make these two Fathers consistent with one another,—the one refusing, and the other challenging, an appeal to the divine oracles! But some examples of perverted renderings shall be given :—

Sect. 10. “Now that is to be sought *which Christ instituted*.”

The rendering should be this :—

“What Christ has taught (*instituit*) should therefore be enquired after.”

The verb, *instituo*, and its derivatives, are evidently used by Tertullian in this section and in other parts, in the sense of teaching. *Hæc est institutio*, is rendered by these writers themselves, in section 36, “This is the teaching.” To translate it here, “instituted,” and to put it in italics, seems to have been done with the view of leading the reader to suppose, that Tertullian referred to some creed or ordinance of Christ. Hence it was found necessary in the remaining clause of this sentence to render *credidisti*, “you have believed,” by the phrase, “you have attained to belief.” But the following sentence presents an instance of still greater perversion; the reference is to Paul’s charge to Timothy :—

“His direction about committing to “faithful men” did not imply a secrecy, but of course care to choose such men for the commission as would preach the Gospel with judgment and discrimination.”

Sec. 26. The whole passage is literally this :—

"It was moreover meet that he should say further (adjiceret—should add,) to him, to whom he committed the ministration of the Gospel, that it was not to be administered everywhere, nor inconsiderately."

The first clause is not in the original; nor is there any thing in the text about "the care to choose." There is not a word about "choosing," nor about "the care" necessary for the purpose. These things are proper in their proper place, and when the original expresses them. Indeed the whole purport of the passage is changed. The main design of the original is to shew how the Gospel was to be administered, that is, "not everywhere, nor inconsiderately." But the main design of it as exhibited by these translators is to shew the necessity of exercising "care to choose" suitable persons for the commission. These writers are constantly influenced by their party notions, and continually bent on the same object, bringing in, wherever they can, by any means possible, what favours their own views. They seem to think of nothing but "the commission." As to the administration of the Gospel, it is not of much consequence. Where it is mentioned, and made the main subject, it is quite right, as it appears, for translators to put "the commission" in its place! And this of course may be done with a good conscience, because it is what favours our own views and furthers our own peculiar object!

Instances of the like kind might easily be added from the six extracts in the "Records," made from this treatise of Tertullian. But I shall only notice here a passage from this same treatise in one of "the Tracts for the Times," No. 57, p. 4; in which a change of meaning is

introduced that can hardly be paralleled. The passage, as translated in the Tract, is the following:—(Tertullian speaks of the heretics.)

Sect. 41. “ *Their ordinations are off-hand, light, variable*; sometimes mere novices are raised by them to church office, sometimes men engaged in worldly business, sometimes deserters from our ranks; whom they hope to make sure of by the compliment, having no reality [of spiritual power] to offer.”

Now I shall give the original of this passage, accompanied by a literal translation:—

Ordinationes eorum temerariæ, leves, inconstantes: nunc neophytos conlocant; nunc seculo obstrictos; nunc apostatos nostros, ut gloria eos obligent, quia veritate non possunt. “Their ordinations are rash, light, variable: they appoint sometimes novices; sometimes those held fast by the world; sometimes our apostates, that they may bind them by glory, because they cannot by truth.”

This is a singular specimen of perversion, which can hardly be reconciled to any thing like common honesty. The perversion was wholly necessary to answer the end for which the passage is quoted: it would have been otherwise entirely useless, being altogether inappropriate; but the new idea that is introduced makes it exactly suitable. According to this new Oxford plan, we can make the Fathers assert anything, or deny anything, just as we please. To make the passage applicatory to the present state of things, it is in some measure newly moulded throughout; but it is the conclusion of it, that receives the completest transmuting touch of the alchymist, by which, *quia veritate non possunt*, is changed into the singular phrase,

“having no reality of spiritual power to offer !” It is not the *authority* to ordain that Tertullian assails, nor the *validity* of their ordinations ; but the unworthy character of the ordained. It was not the thing itself that he blamed, but “the rash, light, and variable” manner in which it was done. Nor is there anything in this whole treatise; nor in the similar works of Irenæus, that bears at all on the point which these Oxford Divines are so anxious to establish. Like St. Paul, when he opposed false teachers and false apostles, these authors do nowhere call in question the validity of their ordinations, but the truth of their doctrines.

There is an evident attempt made in the “Records,” to identify the “apostolicity” as it is called, of the Church, with apostolical succession. This is not the doctrine of Tertullian, as the following passage most clearly shews :—“the heretics will be challenged in the same manner by those churches, which, though they cannot bring forward, as their founder, any of the apostles or of apostolic men, as being much later, being indeed established daily, *yet agreeing in the same faith, are deemed no less apostolical, on account of consanguinity of doctrine* (tamen in eadem fide conspirantes, non minus apostolicæ deputantur pro consanguinitate doctrinæ).” Sect. 32.

Corresponding with this view is the account he gives of what may be called the *descent* of truth. He says that God delivered it to Christ, Christ to the Apostles, and the Apostles to the churches, without singling out the ministers as distinct from the members. This is the purport of the following passage :—

“It therefore appears, that every doctrine, which is

consistent with these apostolical churches, the wombs and originals of the faith (*matricibus et originalibus fidei*), is to be accounted for truth, as doubtless containing what the churches received from the Apostles, the Apostles from Christ, and Christ from God.”

Sect. 21.

This was the opinion of Tertullian, which is in a degree correct, but not wholly so. That the apostles delivered the truth and the whole truth to the churches, is most true; but that the churches retained this truth whole and entire till the time of Tertullian, is what no man, in any measure acquainted with the history and writings of that age, can for a moment believe. That the main doctrines were still held, (at least those which the heretics disputed,) may be truly and fully admitted; but that every doctrine, held by the apostolic churches, was still retained in its purity, entire and unmixed, is what cannot with truth be conceded. The church *began* to “go wrong” in many things very early.

Tertullian
on
Baptism.

But there is another work of Tertullian translated in the “Records.” No. 22, containing a large portion of his treatise on baptism. The translation presents a striking exhibition of the artful tactics of these writers. What suits their views, they select and present to their readers: but what is too low, or too vulgar, or too absurd, they either pass by and leave untranslated, or mould in such a way as to make it appear different from what it really is; so that much of what they bring before the public, is not what Tertullian has actually said. By this mode the writings of the heretics, and even the Koran, might be quoted in favour of any notions we may choose to adopt.

The credit of an author does not depend on insulated

portions of truth which he may advocate, but on the general correctness and consistency of his views. There are some sentiments in this treatise of Tertullian, which are quite sufficient to destroy his credit altogether as a man of sober and correct views on the subject of baptism. But these authors have modified some and left out others. They should have however told their readers, that he maintains the *right of laics to baptize*, and that he discountenances the baptizing of infants. It is enough to say, without producing any examples, that they have, in translating this treatise, betrayed the same want either of discrimination or of honesty, as in the other works which have already been more especially noticed.

A LETTER

ON TRADITION.

I HAVE already sent you some remarks on the "advertisement" to the Rev. J. Newman's Lectures on Romanism, &c. and I feel inclined to add a few observations on the Lectures themselves.* The author builds on a false notion of the Church, and a very false view of tradition. Let these two insecure supports be taken away, and his imposing structure will inevitably fall to the ground; for there is nothing but these two props to support it. But I shall confine my remarks chiefly to tradition, as that is the *main* prop on which he builds his system.

His view on this subject differs but little from that of the Romanists. He maintains that there is a stream of tradition in the same sense as the Church of Rome; only he cuts it off at some indeterminate period, somewhere between the fourth and seventh century. His reasons for the existence of such a stream as he maintains, will not satisfy any true Protestant; nor will his reasons for cutting short its progress satisfy any Romanist. His opinion

* It is not deemed necessary to introduce the previous Letter, as it does not bear materially on the subject of this.

is, that there were some truths—and those important ones, without which we cannot well know the genuine faith—left unrecorded, but which were delivered by the Apostles to their successors, and have been transmitted to future generations; and that they are now to be found in the writings of the Fathers, and in the decrees of councils, as far down, with respect to time, as what cannot be now exactly specified. In the things thus delivered down to posterity, he includes, so far as I can make out, usage, doctrine, and interpretation of Scripture. This appears to me to be his view of tradition.

For such an opinion, he gives us, as I think, no solid reasons, but only some such surmises and conjectures as the Romanists are in the habit of giving. He takes for granted, as they do, that the traditions mentioned by St. Paul were such as were transmitted orally, and afterwards recorded by the Fathers; contrary to the statements of some of those fathers themselves, who, as he maintains, did transmit them; and quite contrary to the current use of the word tradition in that age, and in the ages immediately succeeding.

“When St. Peter,” says Bishop Burnet on the sixth article, “knew by a special revelation that he was near his end, he writ his second epistle, that they might have that as a means of keeping ‘those things always in remembrance after his death.’ Nor do the Apostles give us *any hints* of their having left anything with the Church, to be conveyed down by oral tradition, which they themselves had not put in writing: they do sometimes refer themselves to such things as they had delivered to particular churches; but *by tradition in the Apostles’ days,*

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and for some ages after, it is very clear, that they meant only the conveyance of the faith, and not any unwritten doctrines." The sensible, reasonable, and scriptural view of this subject given by the bishop on the sixth article, forms a striking contrast to the opinions of Mr. Newman; who seems to be minutely acquainted with all that the Romanists have asserted respecting the incompleteness, obscurity, and mysteriousness of Scripture; and hence of the necessity of something additional. No Romanist has ever alleged more for the purpose of depreciating Scripture, and of exalting tradition. Let me call attention to the following extracts:—

"We consider the Church as a witness, a keeper and witness of Catholic tradition." This notion degrades the Church; making her the keeper of what cannot now, with any certainty, be known, and therefore worth very little or nothing. How much more dignified does our Article XX. make her, by setting her forth as "the witness and keeper of Holy Writ!" But the author may say, that she is the witness and keeper of both. He may say so, but our Church does not say so in any of her Articles, or other documents. He goes on,—"*She bears witness to a fact, that such and such a doctrine, or such a sense of Scripture, has ever been received and came from the Apostles.*" "*We consider antiquity and catholicity to be the real guides, and the Church their organ.*" "*The present Church, then, in our view of her office, is not so much the judge of Scripture, as a witness of catholic truths delivered to her in the first ages, whether by councils or by fathers, or in whatever other way.*"

Newman's
Lectures.
p. 321.

p. 322.

p. 323.

The way in which Mr. Newman attempts to prove tra-

dition to be of this high character—"the authoritative teacher," as he says in one place, "of Christians"—is exactly the same with that adopted by the Romanists. The only argument which seems to have any semblance of truth, is that derived from the fact of the New Testament, itself being received on the testimony of the Primitive Church. The various ways in which he states this fact, shew a want of discrimination; for I would not impute a want of honesty. Thus, he says, that we use tradition "for the establishment of the *divinity* of the Scripture," and that we "receive through tradition both the Bible itself, and *the doctrine that it is divinely inspired.*" But it is *not* true, that we build the *divinity* of Scripture on the testimony of the Fathers, or that we receive from them the doctrine that it is divinely inspired. This is wholly a false and distorted statement. Their testimony—that is, written testimony, not oral tradition—is of weight only as it regards certain writings being handed down as the writings of the Apostles and their companions. Their *divinity* we infer from that fact. We do not receive them because the Fathers say that they are Divine, but because they tell us that they are the writings of the Apostles and their associates. This is the view of Bishop Burnet, as given in his Exposition of the Sixth Article. "A great difference," he says, "is to be made between all this and the oral tradition of a doctrine, in which there is nothing fixed or permanent, so that the whole is only report, carried about and handed down. Whereas here is a book, that was only to be copied and read publicly, and by all persons: between which the difference is so *vast*, that it is as little possible to imagine how the one (tradition) should

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continue pure, as how the other (Scripture) should come to be corrupted." "The authority of these books," adds the bishop, "*is not derived from any judgment that the Church made concerning them ; but from this, that it was known that they were writ, either by men who were themselves the Apostles of Christ, or by those who were their assistants and companions.*"

If our author's argument will hold good as to Christian traditions, it may hold good as to Jewish traditions. If it be said, Since you receive the New Testament through the testimony of the Primitive Church, you ought also to receive its traditions: it may be equally said, since you receive the Old Testament through the testimony of the Jewish church, you ought also to receive the Jewish traditions. The Jews, in our Saviour's time, and in succeeding ages, might use exactly the same argument with Mr. Newman. Of this he was evidently aware, and therefore he brings in his "catholicity:" but it does not serve his purpose; for there is catholicity *as much* in the one case as the other. It must appear, truly, very strange to any unbiassed mind, that the Christian Church should fall into the same error, as to oral traditions, as the Jewish, especially when it is considered how decidedly and strongly our Saviour condemned traditions, and how He and his Apostles invariably appealed to the written word. It might have been thought that this example would have afforded sufficient warning to all preceding ages: but it has not. Man is the same being, essentially, in every age; fond of shadows, and disliking realities; enamoured with what flatters his pride, pleases his fancy, and serves his interest; and turning away from what opposes the selfish and corrupt principles of his nature.

In one of the extracts which have been made, our author speaks of tradition as "coming from the Apostles." Now if this can be *proved*, it is, of course, entitled to the same attention with Scripture : but he is not "venturesome" enough yet to say so, though, if he continue to indulge himself in such statements as the following, he may, in time, get courage to make such an assertion :—He says, "Whatever might formerly have been possessed of a strictly traditionary nature ; whatever of rich, but unsorted and uncatalogued treasures ; whatever *too sacred* or *too subtle to record in words*, whether comments on Scripture, or principles of interpreting them, or Apostolic usages ; still we have the essentials of faith." Mr. Newman seems to lament this loss ! And yet he has only to go to the Church of Rome, and he will find all that he has lost, "sorted and catalogued" in decrees of councils and in the bulls of the infallible popes : and whatever has been "too sacred and too subtle to be recorded in words," he may find in the *oral* traditions of that church ! He is, however, very inconsistent : he is either wrong in what he asserts, or he wrongs tradition. If he is right in saying that it comes from the Apostles, then he ought to join the Romanists and say that it is of equal authority with Scripture. But that any man, freed from the fetters of interest and prejudice, knowing what human nature is, and how merely oral reports soon grow into fables, and acquainted in any degree with the history of the Primitive Church, should give to tradition the same weight of authority as to Scripture, is so monstrous as almost to exceed the bounds of credibility. But what surprises me exceedingly, is the attempt made by our author to fix tradition on the Church

Lectures
p. 249.

of England, which acknowledges its authority, as to doctrine, in none of her documents. "Our Church," he says, "adheres to a double rule, Scripture and Catholic tradition; and considers that in all matters necessary to salvation, both safeguards are vouchsafed to us." p. 326. He seems aware of the difficulty of proving this point; and hence in pages 338 and 339 we have some strange philosophisings on the subject, for the purpose of accounting for the omission of more direct reference to tradition. However, he attempts in other parts to make the Church of England recognize the authority of tradition. He refers to the first Homily as implying the principle which he advocates; but I can find nothing there but "the stinking puddles of men's traditions," an expression which surely implies nothing favourable to his scheme. There is an old canon, made in 1571, which seems, at first sight, to afford him some help: but even that yields him no real assistance; for it mentions only what the Catholic fathers and ancient bishops *collected* from the doctrine of the Old and New Testament, and not what they transmitted down by oral tradition from the Apostles. And what they *collected* seems evidently to refer, from the other parts of the canon, not to any doctrinal subjects, or to the articles, but to matters of discipline, especially to the Form of Ordination of archbishops, bishops, priests, and deacons: for the articles are afterwards expressly said to "have been, without doubt, collected from the sacred books of the Old and New Testament," and not from tradition, as conveying the Catholic faith.

The canon itself is too long to be quoted, but the follow-

ing are the words respecting the articles :—*Articuli illi religionis christianæ, in quos consensum est ab Episcopis in legitima et Sancta Synodo, jussu atque autoritate serenissimæ Principis Elizabethæ convocata et celebrata, haud dubie collecti sunt ex sacris libris veteris et novi Testamenti.*

Collection
of
Articles,
&c.
p. 238.

A portion of the concluding part of this canon I beg leave to recommend to the attention of the authors of the Oxford Tracts. It is as follows :—*Vanas et aniles opiniones, et hæresies, et errores pontificios, a doctrina et fide Christi abhorrentes, non docebunt.* Let them observe this part of the canon, and we shall have no more such Oxford Tracts as we have had. It is not necessary to translate the foregoing sentence, for the sake of the authors themselves ; but for the sake of some readers, I will do so :—“ They shall not teach vain and *anile* opinions and heresies, and pontifical errors, abhorrent to the doctrine and faith of Christ.” It is not said, abhorrent to the Catholic faith or Catholic tradition, as our author would doubtless have added, if he had drawn it up.

There is one more attempt made to link tradition to our Church. The adoption of the creeds, it is said, proves this point : and “ the Catholic faith ” is mentioned in one of them. Could there be any-thing so flimsy as this, especially when the article states expressly on what ground they are received and adopted ? They ought “ to be thoroughly received and believed,” says the article, “ for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.” They are adopted, *not* on the ground of tradition, but on the ground of their scriptural character.

These three creeds, especially the Apostles’, are made

an unwarranted use of by our author. Valuable as they are, as doctrinal expositions, none of them are entitled to any high regard on the ground of antiquity. The creed of *Athanasius* is not thought to have been drawn up by him : but to have been collected by some one, nobody knows by whom, from his writings. It is not, says Bishop Burnet, among his works ; nor was it ever heard of *before the eighth century*, an age not very remarkable for purity of doctrine. The *Nicean* creed is the creed of a council held at Nice in the *fourth century*, but not exactly as we have it now : the procession of the Holy Ghost "from the Father," was added in the second general council at Constantinople, and, "from the Son," was added by the Western Church. The *Apostles'* creed is not thought, by any person versed in antiquity, to have been drawn up by them. "There is no reason," says Bishop Burnet, "to believe that this creed was prepared by the Apostles, or that it was of *any great antiquity* ; since *Ruffin*, (who lived in the fourth century) was *the first that published it*. It is true, he published it as the creed of the church of Aquileia ; but that was so late, that neither this nor the other creeds have *any authority on their own account*." How wisely, therefore, has our Church acted in adopting these symbols, not on the ground of antiquity or tradition, but on the ground of their being capable of proof from Holy Scripture ! They were no doubt viewed by our Reformers as containing brief and convenient summaries of Divine truths, exactly in the same way as if any Protestant Church were to adopt Dr. Watts' Catechism, without an atom of idea of bearing testimony, as our author would have it, to tradition.

Durandus, as quoted by Bishop Stillingfleet, in his *Durandus*.
 "Council of Trent Examined," &c. has these words:—
 "All truth is contained in the Holy Scripture at large; but
 for the peoples' *conveniency*, the necessary points are
 summed up in the Apostles' creed." This learned Romanist
 had a far better idea of the ground on which this creed is
 adopted, than our author. Many Romanists before the
 Council of Trent, as Bishop Stillingfleet clearly proves,
 denied explicitly what our author maintains, that is, the
 authority of tradition; and held expressly, that the Scrip-
 ture alone is the test of truth and the rule of faith. The
 following is the testimony of John *Gerson*, declared by *Gerson*.
Zabarella, in the council of *Constance*, to be the greatest
 divine of his time:—"Scriptura nobis tradita est,
 tanquam regula *sufficiens* et *infallibilis*, pro regimine eccle-
 siastici corporis et membrorum, usque in finem seculi.—
 The Scripture has been delivered to us as a *sufficient* and
infallible rule for the government of the ecclesiastical body
 and members, to the end of the world."

Much is made, by Mr. Newman, of the practice of the
 Fathers in referring to Tradition. The reason of this he
 does not clearly or correctly state. Every thing depends
 on the grounds on which Tradition was adduced, and on
 what was understood by the term. The following quo-
 tation from Bishop Burnet, on the Articles, represents the
 case very clearly and very satisfactorily:—"It is plain that
 the Gnosticks, the Valentinians, and other heretics, began
 very early to set up a pretension to a tradition delivered by
 the Apostles to some particular persons, as a key for under-
 standing the secret meanings that might be in Scripture;
 in opposition to which both Irenæus, Tertullian, and others,

make one of two sorts of arguments. The one is the authority of the Scripture itself, by which they confuted their errors; the other is a point of fact, that there was no such tradition. In asserting this, they appeal to those churches which had been founded by the apostles, and in which succession of bishops had been continued down. They say, In these we must search for Apostolical tradition. This was not said by them as if they had designed to establish tradition as an authority distinct from or equal to the Scriptures; but only to shew the falsehood of that pretence of the heretics, and that there was no such tradition for their heresies as they gave out."

Exactly the same view should be taken of tradition when referred to by some of our *Reformers* in their disputes with the Romanists. They gave no authority themselves to tradition: but as the Romanists pleaded it, they denied, and justly, that early tradition was in their favour, but maintained that it was decidedly and expressly against them. The reason for the appeal to tradition has been exactly the same in latter times, as in former ages. It was made by our Reformers, as it was made by the early Fathers, for the purpose of *destroying the claims of false tradition, and not for the purpose of making tradition the test of truth or the rule of faith*. They referred to it as corroborative of what they held as the doctrines of the Bible. *The heretics made the first appeal to tradition; and the orthodox did the same in self-defence, "to clear themselves,"* as Bishop Burnet says, "from the imputation of having innovated any thing in the doctrine or in the ways of expressing it."

In no other way but this, can we account for the strong

things they say in some parts in favour of tradition, and at the same time for their many express declarations that nothing is valid but what the Scriptures contain. When they contended with heretics who pleaded tradition, they adduced tradition to confute them : and yet they spoke of Scripture as the only rule of faith. The author of the "Whole Duty of Man," in his book called "the Lively Oracles," has collected, on this last subject, the opinions of the Fathers of any note during the first centuries, some extracts from which shall in a brief form be added here.

"The
Lively
Oracles."

"The disposition of our salvation is no otherwise known by us, than by those by whom the Gospel was brought to us : which indeed they first preached, but afterward delivered to us in the Scripture, to be the foundation and pillar of our faith."—*Irenæus*.

Pp.
167—176.

"I adore the plenitude of Scripture.....let Hermogenes and his journeymen shew that it is written. If it be not written, let him fear the woe which belongs to them that add or detract."—*Tertullian*.

"Whosoever of us will preserve piety towards God, he cannot otherwise learn it than from the Holy Scripture."—*Hyppolytus*.

"Whence is this tradition ? Is it from the authority of our Lord and his Gospel, or comes it from the commands of the Apostles in their epistles ? Almighty God declares, that what is written should be obeyed and practised. If truth have swerved or failed in any particular, we go backward to the source of Evangelical and Apostolical tradition."—*Cyprian*.

"What are those things which we ought to inquire into ? Even those which are to be found in the Scriptures. Those

things which are not there to be found, let us not seek after."—*Eusebius*.

"It is fit for us to adhere to the word of God, and not relinquish it. Ask not concerning the Trinity; but learn only from the Scriptures; for the instructions which you will find there are sufficient."—*Athanasius*.

"There is no earthly judge, but one is to be sought from above. Yet there is no need of a resort to heaven, when we have in the Gospel a Testament. The Lord who left his will among us, is now in heaven; therefore, let us seek his commands in the Gospel, as in his will."—*Optatus*.

"Believe those (things) which are written; seek not those (things) which are not written."—*Basil*.

"How can we make use of any thing which is not to be found in the Scripture?"—*Ambrose*.

"As we deny not that which is written, so we refuse those which are not written."—*Jerome*.

"The Holy Scripture settles the rule of our doctrine," (which is the same thing as the rule of our faith.)—*Augustine*.

"It is the suggestion of a diabolical spirit to think that any thing besides the Scripture has divine authority."—*Theophilus* of Alexandria.

"If the appeal were to reason, in this case there would be just cause of being troubled: but we appeal to the Scriptures, and they are simple and certain, you may easily yourself judge. He that agrees with the Scriptures, is a Christian; he that resists them, is far out of the way. I pray and exhort you, that giving no heed to what this or that man says, you would consult the Holy Scriptures, and thence learn the Divine riches, and pursue what you have learnt."—*Chrysostom*.

And what if some of the Fathers did lay great stress on tradition, and exalt it to a second or first rule of faith? Except it be *proved* that they did this on Divine authority, what they did is not binding on us. They maintained, held, and practised many things, which have been long neglected, and deserve to be so. The rule laid down by Vincentius in the fourth century, for discovering the true faith and the true church, is very ingenious—but it is human, and not Divine. It might serve in his day for the purpose of silencing heretics; but it is sadly misapplied, when brought forward to weaken or neutralize, in any degree, the supreme and exclusive authority of the Scriptures.

The notions of our author respecting the Apostles' creed, and the use he makes of it, are very strange. He says that the Church teaches first the creed, or bears testimony to the creed as containing the essential doctrines of the Catholic faith, and appeals to Scripture for proof. If he refers to its elementary teaching—to what the Church teaches children—how does he separate the creed from the catechism? And as to public teaching, the word of God is what our Church requires to be taught first and last; and not any tradition, or what is called the Catholic truth. The Scripture, it seems, is only for proof; but the Catholic truth is to be taught! Now, if the Scripture (which he admits) is the final test of truth, what is the use of making the Church travel this useless round; and how is the point to be maintained, that tradition is a supplement to Scripture, and the expositor of Scripture, with which he seems to hold? The scheme, it appears, is this: The Church does not preach Scripture, or bear witness to it, but to traditionary or Catholic truth; and then refers to

Scripture for proof, as the final test of truth. And this is not all, for the Church then, as it seems, brings forward tradition as the interpreter of the final test, the Scripture! Thus Scripture is at first put in the background; and when brought forward, it is not allowed to speak but as tradition dictates to it. If this be not pure Romanism, I know not what is. It is too late in the day, I hope, for such anti-protestant and anti-scriptural notions to meet with any success among the members of the Anglican or any other reformed Church. The following are a few extracts from Bishop Jeremy Taylor, on the subject of tradition, taken from the volume of his *Polemical Discourses* :—

Bp. Jer.
Taylor.

“ When the Fathers appeal to tradition, and with much earnestness and some clamour they call upon heretics to conform to, or be tied by, tradition, it is such a tradition as delivers the fundamental points of Christianity, which were also *recorded in Scripture*. That they did rather urge tradition against them than Scripture, was because the public doctrine of all the Apostolical Churches was *at first* more known and famous than many parts of the Scripture, and because some heretics denied St. Luke's Gospel, some received none but St. Matthew's, some rejected all St. Paul's Epistles; and it was a long time before the whole canon was consigned by universal testimony, some churches having one part, some another—Rome herself had not all—so that in this case the argument from tradition was the most famous, the most certain, and the most prudent. And now, according to this rule, they had more traditions than we have; and traditions by degrees did lessen as they came to be written, and their

necessity was less as the knowledge of them was ascertained to us by a better keeper of Divine truths. There is, indeed, *scarce any thing but what is written in Scripture, that can with any confidence of argument pretend to derive from the Apostles*, except rituals and manners of ministration; but *no doctrines or speculative mysteries* are so transmitted to us by so clear a current, that we may see a visible channel, and trace it to the primitive fountains. Either for the difficulty of their being proved, the incompetency of the testimony that transmits them, or the indifferency of the thing transmitted, *all traditions, both ritual and doctrinal, are disabled from determining our consciences either to a necessary believing or obeying.* It was an excellent saying of Basil, and will never be wiped out with all the eloquence of Perron, in his *Serm. de Fide*—"Manifestus est fidei lapsus, et liquidum superbiæ vitium, vel respuere aliquid eorum quæ scriptura habet, vel inducere quicquam quod scriptum non est." (It is a manifest fall from the faith, and the clear vice of pride, either to refuse any thing of what the Scripture contains, or to *introduce any thing that is not written.*) No man is materially a heretic, but he that errs in a point of faith; and all faith is sufficiently recorded in Scripture; the judgment of faith and heresy is to be derived from thence; and no man is to be condemned for dissenting in an article for whose probatum, tradition only is pretended. It is said that there are traditive interpretations, as well as traditive propositions; but these have not much distinct consideration in them, both because their uncertainty is as great as the other upon the former considerations, as also, because in very deed *there are no such things as traditive*

interpretations universal. . . . They are no more argument than the particular authority of those men whose commentaries they are. Beside the no-necessity of the traditions—there being abundantly enough in Scripture—there are *many things called traditions by the Fathers* which they themselves either prove by no authors, or by *apocryphal, and spurious, and heretical.* The matter of tradition will in very much be so uncertain, so false, so suspicious, so contradictory, so improbable, so unproved, that if a question be contested, and be offered to be proved only by tradition, it will be very hard to impose such a proposition to the belief of all men with an imperiousness or resolved determination; but it will be necessary that men should preserve the liberty of believing and prophesying, and not part with it upon a worse merchandise and exchange than Esau made for his birthright.”

Pol. Disc.
Pp. 979—
984.

Such were I will not say the opinions, but the arguments, of Bishop Jeremy Taylor. Permit me to add a few extracts from the “Collection of Articles,” &c. to which I have already referred. The full title is the following: “A Collection of Articles, Injunctions, Canons, Orders, Ordinances, and Constitutions Ecclesiastical, with other Public Records of the Church of England, chiefly in the times of K. Edward VI., Q. Elizabeth, K. James, and K. Charles I.: published to vindicate the Church of England, and to promote Uniformity and Peace in the same.” My copy is the third edition, printed in 1675, Bishop Sparrow is the reputed author or collector. There is no recognition of tradition in this Collection, but of the Scriptures alone, as the only “*foundation and pillar* of the faith” of our church. Tradition is wholly an

exotic—a plant which in our church has never been “catalogued;” and I hope that every attempt to transplant it from the Roman soil will ever be resisted by the genuine sons of the Protestant Church of England. The following passages are taken from documents not generally known; and they refer us constantly to Scripture, and not at all to tradition:—

“They (the clergy) shall purely and sincerely declare the word of God; and in the same exhort their hearers to works of faith, mercy, and charity, specially prescribed, and commanded in Scripture; and that works devised by men’s phantasies besides Scripture . . . have not only no promise of reward in Scripture for doing of them; but contrariwise, great threats and maledictions of God.”—*Injunctions* by King Edward VI., 1547, p. 2.

“The said ecclesiastical person shall in no wise, at any unlawful time, nor for any other cause, but for their honest necessity, haunt or resort to any taverns or alehouses. And after their dinner or supper, they shall not give themselves to drinking or riot, spending their time idly by day or by night, at dice, cards, or tables playing, or any other unlawful game; but at all times, as they shall have leisure, they shall hear and read somewhat of Holy Scripture.”—*Ibid.* p. 4.

“Whether they have preached, or caused to be preached, purely and sincerely, the word of God, in every of their cures, every quarter of the year, once at least, exhorting their parishioners to works commanded by the Scripture, and not to works devised by men’s phantasies besides Scripture, as wearing or praying upon beads or such like.”—*Articles of Visitation* by Archbishop Cranmer, in the second year of Edward VI., p. 26.

“Whether they have discouraged any person from reading of any part of the Bible, either in Latin or in English; but rather comforted and exhorted every person to read the same, as the very lively word of God, and the special food of man’s soul.”—*Ibid.* p. 26.

“Whether any have wilfully maintained and defended any heresies, errors, or false opinions, contrary to the faith of Christ and Holy Scripture.”—*Ibid.* p. 31.

I may here introduce what occurs in the Articles of Visitation, by Ridley, Bishop of London, in the fourth year of King Edward VI., 1550, as it bears on a subject mooted by the Oxford Tracts men. It is respecting sin after baptism. Their view was evidently considered false and dangerous, otherwise the following inquiry would not have been made in the Articles of Visitation:—

“Whether any saith, that Christian men cannot be allowed to repentance, if they sin voluntary after baptism.” p. 37.

“They (the clergy) shall discourage no man from the reading any part of the Bible, either in Latin or in English, but shall rather exhort *every person* to read the same with great humility and reverence, as the very lively word of God and the especial food of man’s soul, which *all Christian persons* are bound to embrace, believe, and follow, if they look to be saved.”—*Injunctions* by Queen Elizabeth, 1559, p. 69.

“That the vice of damnable despair may be clearly taken away, and that firm belief and stedfast hope may be surely conceived of all their parishioners, being in any danger, they shall learn, and have always in a readiness, such comfortable places and sentences of *Scripture* as do

set forth the mercy, benefits, and goodness, of Almighty God towards all penitent and believing persons, that they may at all times, when necessity shall require, promptly comfort their flock with the lively word of God, which is the only stay of man's conscience."—*Ibid.* p. 72.

There is not a word in these extracts, nor in the documents from which they are taken, about tradition, or the Catholic truth, or the consent of Fathers; but the Scriptures are made every thing both to the clergy and laity; the clergy are to preach the word of God (and *not* what is called the catholic faith) purely and sincerely, and *all* the people are to read it humbly and reverently. What an omission, if tradition is a guide as well as Scripture!

The Articles drawn up in King Edward VI.'s reign, in the year 1552—and afterwards ratified, with some few alterations, in 1571—are essentially the same with our present Articles. And we know that in the Articles there is not one single reference to the Catholic truth or tradition; but the Scripture is continually appealed to as the only repository and standard of truth, to which not only the doctrines, but the ceremonies and the traditions of the Church, as to forms and discipline, are to be made conformable. There is not a single mention made of tradition as to doctrine, or of Catholic truth, or consent of Fathers, or the primitive Church. There is nothing acknowledged, or even referred to, as "the foundation and pillar of faith," but the written word of God. And yet it seems that tradition is a guide to our Church as well as Scripture! It is a guide which she has never recognized; and which, I trust, she will never recognize; for it is a blind one, and will surely lead her into the ditch of error and corruption.

The Canons were first drawn up in the reign of James I., in the year 1603. In these, again, we meet with no recognition of tradition or the Catholic truth, or the primitive church, except in a few rituals respecting the ordination of ministers and the sign of the cross in baptism. On the last subject are the strongest expressions—"Freti orthodoxis iis doctrinæ regulis, de mediis et adiaphoris, quas Divino Canon ac Patrum antiquorum concordie sententiæ judicamus esse consentaneas." Thus they speak of themselves as "relying on those orthodox rules of doctrine, as to middle and indifferent things, which we judge to be agreeable to the Divine Canon and to the concurrent opinion of the ancient Fathers." Now if they relied on the same respecting doctrines of faith, we might expect the same sort of statement; but we find it no where among the documents of our Church: but her invariable language is, that she relies, in this respect, solely and exclusively on Scripture.

ANTI-PAPIST.

APPENDIX :—NOTES.

A. p. 3.

It is singular, that Irenæus in his day,—the end of the second century,—ascribes the various degrees of fasting at Easter, to the rusticity or rudeness of former times. In his letter to Victor, bishop of Rome, partially preserved by Eusebius, speaking of Easter, he thus proceeds:—"Such is the variety of those who observe it, not begun now by us, but long before by our predecessors, who kept it, as it appears, beyond what was strict, having made for posterity a custom according to their simplicity and rudeness, (*καθ' απλοτητα και ιδιωτισμον*—vulgarity.)" He then adds, that this difference did not, and should not, create disunion. "And nevertheless," he observes, "all these were at peace, and we are at peace, one with another : and the disagreement about fasting recommends the harmony of faith. (*την ομονοιαν της πιστewς.*)" Let. i. p. 3.
Lib. v.
cap. 24.
Irenæus.

Irenæus in this passage, gives us, most probably, a key to many of the practices in the primitive church : which later ages ascribed to the apostles. They began in "the simplicity and rudeness" of the first ages : and how many

of such things have been fathered, without any authority, on the apostles themselves! Just and well-founded, no doubt, is what is said by Jeremy Taylor in his "Dissuasive from Popery," on this point. "Traditions," he says, "are said to be apostolical, if they be but ancient; and if they come from we know *not whom*, they are said to come from the apostles; and if *postnate*, they are called primitive: and they argued and laboriously disputed into the title of apostolic traditions, by not only fallible, but fallacious arguments."

Bp. Jeremy Taylor.

Collection of Pol. Disc. p. 406.

N. B. There is an omission of the word *cap*, after "stand up," in p. 9, line 2.

B. p. 10.

Let. i. p. 10. The Archbishop took a wide and a charitable view of the subject, and seemed evidently aware of the truth of what Bishop Stillingfleet announces, when he says,—“Nothing hath been a more fruitful mother of mistakes and errors, than the looking upon the practice of the primitive church through the glass of our own customs.”

Stillingfleet.

C. p. 11.

Let. i. p. xi. Tertullian flourished about the beginning of the third century, and was deemed orthodox until he became a Montanist: which was late in life. Montanus was a Phrygian, and laid claim to a prophetic spirit. He maintained that he, and the two rich ladies, Priscilla and Maximilla,

Montanus.

who were his partners in the delusion, were three chosen vessels, who, being filled with the spirit of prophecy, were destined to "complete the mystery of eternal redemption." They pretended to very great sanctity, were adverse to marriage, and were much given to fasting, and to an austere life. Tertullian joined this strange sect for a time; then left it, and formed a sect of his own, which continued under his name for some years after his death, but eventually ceased to exist. His works were mostly written before he became a Montanist. They were in high repute in the primitive church, and Cyprian especially admired them: and they have no doubt been the means of originating and of perpetuating many false and extravagant notions, particularly with regard to baptism. He was a man of a very vigorous mind, but of a fanciful and exuberant imagination. He also possessed an ascetic temper, and a superstitious spirit, which is sufficiently evidenced by his lapse into Montanism.

D. p. 13.

Hardly any thing escaped the notice of that acute and profound observer of men and things, Lord Bacon. He has, in his Essays, particularized, with his usual discrimination, the different causes of superstition. His words are these:—"The causes of superstition, are,—

Pleasing and sensual rites and ceremonies;

Excess of outward and *Pharisaical holiness*;

Over-great reverence of *traditions*, which cannot but load the church;

Let. i. p. 13.

Lord
Bacon.

The stratagems of Prelates for their own ambition and lucre ;

The favouring too much of *good intentions*, which openeth the gates to conceits and novelties ;

The taking an aim at divine matters by human, which cannot but breed mixture of imaginations ;

And lastly, *barbarous times*, especially joined with calamities and distresses."

E. p. 17.

- Let.i. p. 17. Bishop Jeremy *Taylor*, sufficiently partial to the Fathers, if not too much so, speaks thus of their authority in his Introduction to his "Dissuasive from Popery," second part. "It is false, that the testimony of the Fathers, as such, is infallible,—since the Fathers never pretended to be assisted by a supernatural miraculous aid, or inspired by infallible spirit. If it be said, that they were assisted infallibly in some things, and not in all, it is said to no purpose ; for unless it be infallibly known where the infallibility resides, every man must tread fearfully, for he is sure the ice is broken in many places, and he knows not where it will hold. S. Austin did not think the Fathers before him to be infallible, when it is plain, that in many doctrines, without scruple he rejected the doctrines of his predecessors. And for that, S. Hierom hath given satisfaction to the world in divers places of his own writings. "I suppose," he says, "Origen is, for his learning to be read as Tertullian, Novatus, Arnobius, Apollinarius, and some writers, greek and latin, that we *choose out that which is good, and*

Bp.
Jeremy
Taylor.

avoid the contrary." "So that it is evident the Fathers themselves have no conceit of the infallibility of themselves or others, the Prophets and Apostles and Evangelists only excepted. What think we of the saying of the Cardinal Cajetan? "If you chance to meet with any new exposition which is agreeable to the text, although perhaps it differs from that which is given by the *whole current* of the holy Doctors, I desire the readers that they would not too hastily reject it." Again, "Let no man therefore reject a new exposition of any passage of Scripture, under pretence that it is contrary to what the ancient doctors gave." What think we of those words of Petavius? "There are many things by the most holy Fathers scattered, especially S. Chrysostom, in his homilies, which, if you would accommodate to the rule of exact truth, they would seem to be *void of good sense.*"

Collection
of
Pol. Disc.
p. 373.

Ibid.
p. 376.

Perhaps no correcter views have ever been given of the Fathers, than by the late Rev. Thomas Scott, in his answer to Bishop Tomline. This venerable man seems to have possessed as much sound judgment and accurate discrimination, combined with sober and deep piety, as have been united in one person, it may be, in any age. His commentary on the Bible, as a whole, is no doubt superior to any that has ever been published, if the exhibition of the true and consistent meaning of the Divine word be admitted, as it ought to be, the highest excellence. The following passages exhibit the Fathers in their true light:—

"The ancient Fathers of the Christian church may be read with benefit in various ways; their persons ought in general, to be venerated; even their supposed mistakes are

Rev. T.
Scott's
Works.

entitled to our candour : but they *have no authority over our creed*, any more than we have over the creed of our remote posterity. So little agreement in sentiment is found among these Fathers, that it would be a very easy task to bring together a long catalogue of their mutual discordances ; and so inaccurate were they as to historical facts, that it would be equally easy to make a long list of their undeniable mistakes. Their comments upon the scripture were often such as would be almost universally rejected, nay, despised, in these days. They were uninspired men, and fallible, as others are."

Vol. ii.
p. 223.

F. p. 19.

Letter ii.
p. 19.

There are a few, besides those mentioned in the text, of whose writings Eusebius and others make mention : and of the writings of some of them they have retained some fragments : they are the following :—

Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, the author of the millenarian opinion ; who is said by Eusebius to have been a man of a "very narrow understanding."

Quadratus, Bishop of Athens, author of an apology, about the year 126.

Aristides, an Athenian layman, a cotemporary of the foregoing, and a christian apologist.

Hegessippus, author of "historical memorials," who lived about the time of Irenæus.

Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, who wrote several epistles.

Philippus, Bishop of Gortyna, who wrote a book against Marcion.

Melito, Bishop of Sardis, who was an apologist, and wrote several books.

Apollinaris, Bishop of Hierapolis, an apologist, and an author of some books.

Pynitus, Bishop of the Cretians, a writer of some epistles. Eusebius mentions two others, without saying who they were, namely, *Modestus* and *Musanus*. The fragmentary remains of the foregoing authors give us no high idea of the excellency of their writings.

G. p. 19.

There are other things not authentic, besides the canons mentioned in this passage. Echard, in his Ecclesiastical History, speaking of Clement, refers thus to some of them :—"Several other writings are falsely imputed to St. Clement, as particularly, the *apostolical constitutions*, an ancient and useful work, but writ long after his death ;—the *Recognitions*, an ancient book, abounding with errors and fables ;—*Clementina*, and the *Conferences* of St. Peter and Appion, works of the same nature and authority with the *Recognitions*."

Letter ii.
p. 19.

Echard's
Eccles.
History.
p. 427.

H. p. 22.

That this Barnabas was the Barnabas mentioned in Scripture as the companion of Paul, is the opinion of some, and of Archbishop Wake among others. But when I read the epistle, and compare its contents with the character given

Letter ii.
p. 22.

of Paul's companion, I cannot but think, that the writer of this epistle must have been some other person. Not that it is wholly necessary for us, from such a comparison, to have recourse to such an opinion: for a person once right in the faith and possessing many excellences as a minister, *may* afterwards, fall into strange fancies and errors. But I find, that many entertain this opinion, and seem quite convinced, that this epistle is the production of some fanciful Jewish convert: who, to make his epistle more acceptable, prefixed to it the name of Barnabas,—a practice not uncommon in those days.

I. p. 38.

- Letter iii.
p. 38. *Milner*, in his Church History, apologizes for Ignatius's strong language on this point, in a way calculated to remove the objection in *some* measure, though not to the extent he wishes:—"The circumstances," he says, in which the churches were, sufficiently justify the strong expressions of Ignatius. Heretics of various kinds abounded; and their specious artifices were likely to seduce the minds of the weak. What, then, could be so just a preservative to them, as to stick close to the society of their faithful pastors, the successors of the apostles?" Ignatius was no doubt right, in requiring their adherence and subjection to their faithful pastors; but he was not right in requiring the same honour and reverence to be paid to them, as to God and the Saviour; nor was he right in not suggesting, which he seems not to have done in any direct and plain manner, that this honour and reverence were only due to
- Milner*.
- Vol. i.
p. 157.

them, while they taught the truth of God, and followed the precepts of the Saviour. Paul would have his people follow him, *as* he followed Christ. Ignatius's omission as to this point has been the occasion of great evils in after-ages, and continues to be so still. The notion, that a Minister, as a Minister, independently of what he teaches, and of what he exemplifies in his life and spirit, is to be regarded as a true Minister, is a mistake, for which we are indebted, no doubt in a great measure to the extravagant and unguarded language of Ignatius. The Primitive church was inoculated with this notion, and transmitted it down to posterity : and we have not yet got rid of it. "Ignatius," says Milner, "certainly would not have wished the Ephesians to follow unsound and unfaithful pastors." This may be very true : but he has not said so, and therefore his unmeasured language has been too often taken as applicatory to all, good and bad, right or wrong in the faith, provided they be "external mark" ministers.

K. p. 45.

A pretence is afforded for reviving saint's-days, by our calendar having retained the notice of them, and by our Liturgy having services for *some* of them. The practice has become nearly obsolete in our Church : and the experience of past ages affords no great encouragement to revive it : and we must be blind indeed not to take lessons from past times. Such observances have ever been, with few exceptions, the nurseries of pharisaical formalists, and the means of promoting extravagant veneration for men.

Letter iii.
p. 45.

What have been, and are still, the effects in the church of Rome? Their many fasts and festivals, and multiplied seasons of devotion, tend evidently to increase degeneracy and ungodliness, rather than spiritual worship and piety. The mechanical performance of numerous religious services, (for it cannot be any thing else,) has a hardening effect on the mind, and fails not to promote and foster a self-righteous spirit. The man who is very punctual in going through his routine of prayers, in observing fasts, in attending mass, and in confessing to his priest, is, it may be, at the same time, an habitual robber or a pirate, an adulterer or an assassin. Of such monsters, no community in the world presents so common instances as the church of Rome: which exceeds every other in ceremonials; its religious, or rather superstitious observances being not equalled by those of any sect even in the darkest regions of Paganism. And yet this is the church which the wise men of the Oxford Tracts would have us to imitate! To multiply religious observances, to add services of will-worship, to institute fasts and festivals, may have a show of religion and of humility: but the effect has ever been, and is likely still to be, to form hypocrites, to create self-judiciaries, to harden men for the perpetration of every wickedness, even while saying their prayers, and to raise up a host of senseless devotees, fitter for bedlam than for the avocations of public life. He who "knew what was in man" has not appointed such things; and were they necessary or useful, he doubtless would have done so. But men would be wiser than the only wise God. To "worship God in spirit and in truth," is the chief and principal matter, and what our Saviour has *expressly* required.

The small portion of such observances still recognized in our church, was retained no doubt for the sake of conciliating those of the Romish communion; and not because our Reformers had any predilection for them. This was clearly the opinion of Bishop Stillingfleet. Having spoken of the conciliatory conduct of the French Reformers with respect to the Romanists, he says,—“The same temper was used by our Reformers in the composing of our Liturgy, in reference to the Papists, to whom they had an especial eye, as being the only party then appearing, whom they desired to draw into their communion, by *coming as near them as they well could*.” And then follows what is deserving of notice in the present day:—“And certainly, those holy men, who did seek by any means to draw in others, at such a distance from their principles as the Papists were, did never intend by what they did for that end, to exclude any truly tender consciences from their communion. The *same reason*, which at that time made them yield so far to them then, *would now have persuaded them* to alter and lay aside all those things which yield matter of offence to any of the same profession with themselves now.” The Protestant principle is to diminish such observances; but the Romish, to retain and increase them. The former is accustomed chiefly to regard the *power*, and the latter, the *form*, of godliness.

Stilling-
fleet.Irenic.
p. 122.Ibid.
p. 123.

L. p. 49.

It is remarkable, how the description of what Irenæus calls, “the future apostacy under Antichrist,” comports

Letter iv.
p. 49.

with the character of the apostate church of Rome. While discussing this subject, he speaks thus :—

“As many as keep friendship (*φίλιαν*) with God, to them he affords communion with himself; and communion with God is life and light, and the enjoyment of the good things which come from him. As many as depart from God, in compliance with their own opinion, (*κατα την γνώμην αυτων*,) on them he brings the separation which is from him: and separation from God is death, as separation from light is darkness; and separation from God is the loss of all good things which come from him. They, therefore, who through apostacy cast away the things aforesaid, being destitute of all good things, remain under punishment; God, indeed, does not in the first place punish them, but punishment itself follows them, because of their being destitute of all good things, (that is, the life and light which are connected with God’s friendship and communion.) And the good things of God are eternal and endless; therefore the loss of them will be eternal and endless.”

Lib. iv.
cap. 17.

Pursuing the same subject, he has these striking words.—

“Since therefore in this world, some run to the light, and through faith unite themselves to God, (*δια της πίστεως ενουσιν εαυτους τω Θεω*,) and some depart (*αφιστανται*, stand aloof—withdraw,) from the light, and separate themselves from God, the Word of God will come, and appoint an habitation fitted for all,—for those who are in the light, that they may enjoy the good things that are in Him,—and for those who are in darkness, that they may partake of the wretchedness that is in it. Therefore he says, that He will call those on the right hand into the kingdom of heaven, and will send those on the left hand,

into everlasting fire, for they had deprived themselves of all good things. And on this account the apostle says,—“Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, God therefore will send on them the working of error, (*operationem erroris*), that they may believe a lie, that they all may be condemned, who have not believed the truth, but have sided with iniquity.” He then speaks of Antichrist, as “concentrating apostacy in himself, and sitting in the temple of God, that they who are seduced by him may adore him as Christ, (*Sicut Christum adorent illum*).” After this he applies to Antichrist, Rev. xiii. 2—18, and quotes the verses at large.

Lib. v.
Cap. 28.

It appears, that the origin and the very essence of apostacy, according to Irenæus, is to depart from the friendship of God and communion with Him, or in other words, to depart from the light and to separate from God. It is not to separate from communion with any visible Church, but to separate and depart from Divine light, and the enjoyment of the good things that come from God. A striking comment in chap. 27, bears the same aspect:—‘On this account,’ he says, ‘the Lord has said, “He that believeth on me shall not be condemned;” that is, shall not be separated from God, for he is united to God by faith (*adunitus est per fidem Deo*). The union then, according to Irenæus, is by faith, and by faith in Christ; and then follows friendship and communion with God. Now the apostacy of the Romish Church most evidently consists in the very things noticed by Irenæus. It has most clearly departed from the true light of God’s word, and from spiritual communion with God, as its deeds for ages incontestably prove. What does it make necessary

to salvation? Not faith in the Saviour, but in effect faith in the Church. It has in fact taken the place that belongs to God and the Saviour, and makes proselytes to itself, and not true disciples to the Great Redeemer. The tendency of all the efforts of the divines of the Oxford Tracts is exactly the same. They try with all their might and skill, to substitute the teaching of the Church for the teaching of the word of God, which is the only safe light to our paths,—and communion with the Church, for communion with God himself by faith in Christ Jesus. Increase rituals after the fashion of the Church of Rome, make them very important things, enhance the value of Sacraments, exalt the visible Church, represent it as the only medium of communication between God and his people, and depreciate faith in Christ and individual communion with God, and you will not fail to produce the awful apostacy which Irenæus describes, the very apostacy of Antichrist: and this is the manifest tendency of the doctrines of the Oxford Tracts. Let all therefore beware of them, who dread this enormous sin. The spirit of apostate Rome is evidently working at Oxford with all its accustomed subtleness and plausibility.

M. p. 50.

Letter iv.
p. 50.

The following remarks of Scott on the points referred to in the text, are just and appropriate:—"The Judaizing teachers seem to have blended their system with speculations borrowed from the Pagans and their sects of Philosophers; thus the traditions of the sages and those of the

Pharisees were incorporated. By these means the Judaizing teachers had *begun to corrupt Christianity* with a new and refined species of Idolatry. To add *voluntarily* to the rule of duty, and thus to render it more strict, had a resemblance of *great devotion and extraordinary sanctity* : but it implied that God gave a defective rule, and that he would be *pleased with what he never commanded*. The abstaining from meats, with various self-imposed austerities, might have *shewn of extraordinary spirituality*, by which the body was neglected, from an affected superiority to animal indulgence, and willingness for mortifications and suffering : yet all this was not in any honour to God, or anything valuable in itself,—nay, the whole tended to satisfy, in a dishonourable manner, the propensities of the flesh, or the carnal mind, by gratifying self-will, self-wisdom, self-righteousness, bigotry and contempt of others."

Comment
on
Col. ii. 8,
18, and 23.

N. p. 54.

This passage has been found fault with by a correspondent in the "Record." What has been objected to was substantially what follows :—

1. That the sentence from Ignatius, "the medicine," &c. is quoted with approbation in the 27th Homily.
2. That our Reformers quoted largely from the Fathers, and thereby approved of them.
3. That our Church teaches on all important points as the primitive Church and martyrs did teach.
4. And lastly, that I am inconsistent in condemning the Fathers, and praising the Homilies.

Letter iv.
p. 54.

My answer to this correspondent was in substance the following :—

1. That the above sentence is quoted in the Homily in a *qualifying* form ;—the Fathers are said, not to have been “ afraid ” to designate the eucharist by these and similar terms, and that it stands connected in the Homily with a right explanation of the ordinance, and not in an insulated form as in Ignatius, and therefore not liable to be taken literally, and thus taken wrongly.

2. That I am fully aware, that our Reformers did quote many passages from the Fathers, evidently approving of them, which I have done also in a measure ; but that this does not shew that they approved of *all* that the Fathers have said.

3. That our Church teaches many things taught by the primitive Church, and that it does *not* teach many other things which the primitive Church did evidently teach, as I have already proved as to several particulars in my Letters ; moreover, that our Church teaches much more than what the primitive Church seems to have known, and that it teaches some things contrary to its most current opinions, the Scriptures being much better understood by our Reformers than by either the early or the later Fathers.

4. And lastly, that my denunciation of the Fathers extends to *some* things and not to all,—that our Reformers produced from their writings the *best* things, because this course was most suitable to the circumstances of their case, — and that it is my ungracious work to produce the *worst* things, because such a course is rendered necessary by the circumstances of the present day.

O. p. 56.

It is very doubtful whether even the essentials of the Gospel could have been faithfully conveyed for such a term of years *without* written documents. It was the written Gospel that enabled the primitive Church to retain as it did, even the essentials of truth : and it was no doubt the scarcity of copies that occasioned corruption to creep in so fast into it. The words of Chrysostom on this point are very striking :—" Reading the Holy Scriptures," he says, " is a powerful defence against sin, while ignorance of them is a deep precipice, a profound gulph ; it is to renounce salvation and refuse the knowledge of the divine law. This is *that which has brought in heresies*, occasioned the corruption of morals, and disordered all things."

Letter iv.
p. 56.

Chryso-
stom.

Tom. i.
p. 67.

P. p. 59.

What Bishop *Reynolds* says of what is due generally to ancient authors, may justly be applied especially to the Fathers :—" We may assent to them as ancients, but not as oracles. They may have our minds easy and inclinable : they may *not* have them *captivated* and fettered to their opinions."

Letter iv.
p. 59.

Bp.
Reynolds.

N.B. The two next referential letters in the margin of the text are wrong ; the O in page 67, should be Q ; and the P in page 71 should be R.

Q. p. 67.

Letter v.
p. 67.

Justin frequently speaks of the *Word* or *Reason*. The following passages shall be added;—

Justin.

“ We have been taught that Christ is the first-begotten of God; and we have before declared Him to be Reason (*λογον*), of which the whole race of men partake; and they who live by reason are Christians, though they may be called atheists. Such among the Greeks were Socrates and Heraclitus, and others like them: and among the barbarians (*ἐν ἑαρθαροις*) Abraham and Ananias, Azarias, Misael, and Elijah, and many others. So also the ancients who lived without reason (*ἀνευ λογον*), were unprofitable and enemies to Christ, and murderers of those who lived by reason. But they who did and do live by reason, are Christians, being both fearless and intrepid.”

Apol. i.
Sect. 46.

“ We know that some that were of the opinions of the Stoics, as also sometimes the poets, when they became adorned, as to moral reason (*ἠθικον λογον*), through the seed of reason which is implanted in the whole race of men (*δια το εμφυτον παντι γενει ανθρωπων σπερμα του λολου*), have been hated and murdered.”

Apol. ii.
Sect. 8.

“ The doctrines of Plato are not alien to those of Christ; but they are not wholly similar, nor those of others, as the Stoics, poets, and historians. For every one who saw what was native (*το συγγενες*), from having portions of seminal divine reason (*σπερματικου θειου λογου*), has well spoken. But they who have said things contrary to themselves, on the more important matters, seem not to have

possessed the science that is hidden (*αποπτον*, unseen), and the knowledge that cannot be refuted. Whatever therefore has been well said by them all, belongs to us Christians. All writers, by means of the innate seed of implanted reason (*δια της ενουσης εμφυτου του λογου σπορας*) could obscurely see things as they are."

Justin also speaks of a seed given by power (*κατα δυναμιν*), that is, by created power, if I rightly understand him; and of a seed given by grace (*κατα χαριν*). Hence it is not improbable that the idea of "seminal grace" has originated with Justin, and that he derived it from the heathen notion of seminal reason: and the idea, that the latter is universal, has probably led to the notion, that the former is through Christ become so too.

Ibid.
Sect. 13.

R. p. 71.

The present bishop of Lincoln, Dr. Kaye, in his "Account of Justin," distinctly admits that Justin was defective in his views of original sin, but maintains, that on the subject of justification he is "sufficiently clear and explicit;" two things which appear to me to be incompatible: and the passages referred to by his lordship, do not very clearly bear him out in the opinion which he has expressed, the materials on this subject are very scanty, and are not very explicit. It is not so much the acquittance of a criminal that Justin speaks of, except in one or two instances, and those nearly in the words of Scripture, as deliverance from the power of sin and the corruptions of our nature; so that on this subject he is neither very clear nor explicit.

Letter v.
p. 71.

Bp. Kaye.

S. p. 90.

Letter vi.
p. 90.

Something like this heretical work, though in a singular way, has been actually done by the Oxford divines. Irenæus's Creed and what follows it, are given in No. 14 of "the Records of the Church," published by these authors. There is then appended an address, as it appears, to all Dissenters, in which they use the following language :— "Wanderers and disputers, perplexed enquirers and weak brethren ! come home to this doctrine of Christ." We are afterwards given to understand that this doctrine is only to be found in the established Church. But is this the fact ? By no means. The doctrine and faith mentioned by Irenæus, is preached as faithfully and harmoniously in every meeting-house in the land, with the exception already specified, as in the Church, and much *more* fully and faithfully than in the churches of these divines, if we are to judge of their preaching by the contents of their Tracts. And yet people are invited to "come home" to the Church to hear this doctrine ! If these authors wish to maintain the superior claims of the Church, let them do so fairly and honestly, and put its claims on a right footing and not on a false one. To invite people to the Church to hear what they have already got, is extremely absurd and ridiculous. Such a shallow artifice as this can never promote, but is sure to injure the interest of the Church. This is not the time for any Jesuitical trickery to succeed.

T. p. 92.

The following passage is to the same purport :—" Every question cannot receive solution by another that may be asked, nor will ambiguity be solved, by those who have any sense, by another ambiguity, nor enigmas by another greater enigma ; but those things which are of this kind receive solutions by things that are manifest, consonant and clear."

Letter vi.
p. 92.

Lib. ii.
Cap. 10.

U. p. 94.

Similar to those in the text are the following words :—" For what sort of thing is it for us, to leave the words of the Prophets and of the Lord and of the Apostles, and to attend to these (heretics,) who say nothing that is sane ! "

Letter vi.
p. 94.

Lib. ii.
Cap. 2.

X. p. 96.

The lubricity of the heretics was very great, but not without a parallel in after ages, nor in our own times. When beaten on one ground, they ran to and occupied another. When Scripture failed them, they had recourse to tradition : and when tradition failed to serve their purpose, they pretended to a higher knowledge than the Apostles themselves. " When we summon them," says Irenæus,

Letter vi.
p. 96.

“ to that tradition, which is from the Apostles, which by the successions of the Presbyters is preserved in the churches (quæ per successiones presbyterorum in Ecclesiis custoditur), they oppugn tradition, and say, that they themselves have found the genuine truth, being wiser not only than the Presbyters, but also than the Apostles Against such we have to contend, who, being slippery like serpents, endeavour to escape on every side. We must therefore resist them on every side. Though it is not easy for a person, that is seized by error, to repent ; it is yet not wholly impossible to escape error, when the truth is laid before us.”

Lib. iii.
Cap. 2.

From this extract we see that Irenæus uses the expression “ the succession of Presbyters,” though that of “ the succession of *Bishops*,” is what he mostly employs. It is singular to find that Irenæus and Tertullian, the first authorities on the subject, disagree as to the Roman succession, supposed to be the most perfect of all. But the succession even of the infallible Pope is doubtful, is involved in obscurity ! The list of Irenæus, as given in Lib. iii. cap. 3, and the list of Tertullian, as given in his verses against Marcion, Lib. iii. cap. 9, are the following:—

IRENÆUS'S LIST.

1. Linus
2. Anacletus
3. Clemens
4. Evaristus, &c.

TERTULLIAN'S LIST.

1. Linus
2. Cletus
3. Anacletus
4. Clemens, &c.

There has been a good deal said by the Fathers in favour of each ; but the point has never been fully settled. And yet the succession is as infallible as the Pope himself !

There is another point on which Irenæus and Tertullian

differ with respect to the Church of Rome: Irenæus says, that the Church of Rome was founded and constituted jointly by Peter and Paul (a gloriosissimis duobus apostolis Petro et Paulo, . . . fundata et constituta): but Tertullian, a little later in time than Irenæus, ascribes the honour solely to Peter. It may also be added, that according to Irenæus, neither Peter nor Paul was ever a Bishop of Rome, for they jointly appointed the first bishop:—"The blessed Apostles," he says, (that is, Peter and Paul,) "having founded and built the Church (of Rome,) delivered to Linus the administration of the episcopacy (*Δίνω την της επισκοπης λειτουργιαν ενεχειρισαν*)." See Carm.
Lib. iii.
Cap. 9.

Who would ever hence conclude that either of the Apostles was ever a bishop of Rome? If Peter was, then Paul was: or if the first appointment belonged to Peter, it belonged equally to Paul. There is no testimony for the two first centuries that in the least degree favours the extravagant and absurd pretensions of the Church of Rome. It appears from Scripture history, and from every account that exists of an early date, that Paul had much more to do with the Church of Rome than Peter. It was Tertullian in the beginning of the third century, that began to lay the foundation for its exorbitant claims, by saying among other things, that it possessed the chair (cathedra) of Peter. And these claims increased in succeeding ages to a vast extent, by no divine authority or countenance, but by pride, ambition, ignorance and folly: and they are still maintained by the same means,—claims that are as absurd as they are profane, and as groundless as they are impious, and justified by a sophistry equalled only by its intolerance, tyranny, and superstition.

Y. p. 97.

Letter vi.
p. 97.

That the heretics maintained that there were some secret truths that were to be delivered orally, appears evident from various passages. The following is one of them:—"They themselves thus explain and say, that Jesus spoke apart in mystery to his disciples and apostles, and deemed them worthy to deliver these things to the worthy and the obedient."

Lib. i.
Cap. 24.

To every assertion like this, Irenæus invariably replies, by denying that there was any such secret doctrine, and maintaining, that the apostles taught the whole truth openly and clearly to all. "How can these," he says, "who were never connected with Paul, boast, that they have learnt hidden and ineffable mysteries? For Paul himself has made it manifest, that he plainly taught those things which he knew, not only to those who were with him, but to all who heard him." Then he refers to his address at

Lib. iii.
Cap. 24.

Miletus to the Ephesian elders. Having previously alluded to Luke, he subjoins the following sentence:—"Thus the apostles delivered plainly to all, even denying to none, the things which they themselves had learned from the Lord." And in another place, he says:—"The doctrine

id.

of the apostles is clear and certain, and leaves out nothing (nihil subtrahens—συστρελλας—subtracting or contracting nothing); and they did not teach some things in secret, but other things openly."

Ibid.
Cap. 15.

Z. p. 99.

(This letter in the margin of the text, is put eight lines too low.) This notion about Adam, as Fenarientius assures us, was taught with great consent, *magno consensu*, by the Fathers. He mentions Origen, Cyprian, Athanasius, Basil, Chrysostom, Epiphanius, Augustin and Jerome—a great host indeed! What he says of the last is curious,—that in one part of his works he disapproves of this notion, that in another he dares not condemn it; and that in a third, he embraces it: *Hanc sententiam Hieronymus in 27 Matth. non probat; in 5 cap. ad Ephes. damnare non audet; sed Epist. ad Marcellum, eam amplectitur.*

Letter vi.
p. 99.

A a. p. 101.

Irenæus connects gifts, succession, conduct, and sound doctrine, together; and he viewed succession as nullified, or of no benefit, when not accompanied with other things, as is evident from what he says of the “unjust Presbyters.” The following passage presents his view very clearly:—“Where the gifts of the Lord are bestowed, there we ought to learn the truth, from those with whom is that succession of the church, which is from the apostles,—and that *conduct* appears, which is sound and irreproveable,—and that *word*, which is unadulterated and incorruptible,”

Letter vi.
p. 101.

This was his view of the matter, and probably correct;

Lib. iv.
Cap. 45.

corresponding with the state of things in his day. But it does not follow, that the same view should be taken now. If the state of things is changed, our views must change also. The *channel* of truth may vary, while the truth itself continue exactly the same. It flowed then through the Churches first established: and an appeal to what was taught in the Churches was then proper and just. But since his time, "the gifts of God," "the irreproveable conduct," and the "unadulterated word," have ceased in many instances to be connected with "succession;" and the same appeal could not, under such altered circumstances, be justly made. This appeal, made by Irenæus, Tertullian and others, when arguing against the heretics, wholly depended on time and circumstances and facts: and to deem such an appeal proper, just and valid, when the reasons for it have ceased to exist, betrays great blindness and delusion.

B b. p. 136.

Letter vii.
p. 136.

It is amazing what respect is professed at times, by the writers of the Oxford Tracts, for the Scriptures. Were this uniform, it would be right to regard it as genuine. We are called upon in one of the Tracts on Baptism, to come "to our Saviour's feet," and to "think what his words, teachingly considered, would lead to." Were they always to lie there, and learn at his mouth, the doctrines of their Tracts would be very different from what they are. Where they lie mostly, is evidently at the feet of the Fathers, in order to learn Catholic truth. They lie some-

times at the feet of the fanciful Barnabas, and of the enthusiastic Hermas, to collect their vagaries, with the view of putting them in their Tracts, and also at the feet of Ignatius, to gather his extravagant and unscriptural notions respecting the office and authority of Christian ministers. This is what is mostly done, instead of lying at the feet of the Saviour, and of his inspired Apostles. But this sort of appeal is evidently made to "the religious sensibilities of the mind," in which they complain, that their predecessors were deficient. This deficiency, it seems, is now to be made up; and doubtless, it is a very effectual mode of gaining the consent of many. When a profound regard is avowed for the divine word, it tends to prepare the religious mind to receive what is said. But readers should remember, that great *professions* of this kind, are always very suspicious. An honest man has no need to tell the world, that he is honest; but the dishonest finds it necessary to do so. The best proof that we can give, that we regard the authority of Scripture, is by submitting to it in every thing, and in preference to any other authority.

C c. p. 149.

The word, *altar*, seems to be a favourite term with the divines of the Oxford Tracts, and of the British Magazine. It is sanctioned by the Fathers, which, as it appears, is a far better thing than that it should be sanctioned by an apostle! "The Lord's table" will not do, though it be an apostolic expression. Altar, is much better, for the Fathers

Letter viii.
p. 149.

Altar.

have used it ! In the estimation of this party, the Fathers are evidently an authority higher than the Apostles themselves. Our Church has in this instance, as in many others, departed from the Fathers, and adhered to the Word of God. These writers seem anxious to wean us again from the Scriptures, and to attach us to the Fathers. Like the Papists, they profess great reverence for the Scriptures ; but really and practically, the Fathers are in many instances, their teachers and guides.

A writer some time ago, in the *British Magazine*, apprised his readers of a new plan which he had adopted in his church, that of introducing a small table, on which the sacramental elements are to be placed by lay-hands, lest, as it seems, the altar should be polluted by them ! His own hands, of course very holy, seem alone to be fit to place the elements on the altar ! It has been said, that we have some Socinians in disguise in our Church. However that may be, it is pretty clear, that we have some Papists and in no way much disguised. But this new plan is defended by the writer, on the ground of its being a revival of an old practice. The primitive Church, it is said, had a table of this kind, as a medium of conveyance, to prevent lay-hands from touching and polluting the altar. It would be well to ask this writer, Wherefrom did the primitive Church derive this custom ? It was doubtless derived from the Pagans. The heathen priests *had* a table of this kind, on which the people placed their offerings, which by the holy hands of the priests, were afterwards removed to the altar. See *Encycl. Brit.* under the article, *altar*. Now this writer is so enamoured with every thing practised by the primitive Church, however

heathenish it may be, and falls in so readily with any thing that tends to impress the people with a high notion of priestly sanctity, that he wholly disregards the prudence of our Reformers, in discontinuing vain and superstitious customs, and exposes himself to the just charge of innovating, and even of heathenizing our Church, without any authority: and so pleased he seems to be with this freak of superstition, that he must publish it to the world; and he has found an easy mode of doing so, through the pages of a Magazine which furthers every retrograde movement towards Popery.

D d. p. 153.

The following remarks on eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of Christ, are clear and satisfactory, and wholly correspond with the general system of divine truth:—

Letter viii.
p. 153.

“The flesh and blood of Christ, as separated by death, procured salvation for sinners; and the expressions here employed, refer to the intention, efficacy and benefits of the sufferings of Christ. These are all needful to the life and health of our souls, in our ruined state, as meat and drink are to the life and health of our bodies.”

Scott on
John vi.
verse 53.

“Whosoever eateth the flesh, and drinketh the blood of Christ, in the sense here spoken of, ‘abideth in Christ, and Christ in him;’ and therefore is a true and lively member of Christ’s body; and he shall have eternal life, and be a partaker of a happy resurrection: and so no person can either be wicked here, or deprived of everlasting life hereafter, who, in the sense here mentioned, eateth of the flesh, and drinketh of the blood of Christ.

“ Now this is very true, of eating spiritually and by faith, as it imports believing in Christ : for “ this,” saith Christ, “ is the will of Him that sent me, that every one who believeth in the Son, may have everlasting life ; and I will raise him up at the last day.” But then of the sacramental eating of Christ’s flesh, it is as false ; for this was eaten by a Judas, and continually is eaten by millions, who are both wicked here, and will be damned hereafter. This therefore *cannot* be the import of our Saviour’s words.”

Whitby in
loco.

E e. p. 164.

Letter ix.
p. 164.

It is quite amusing to observe, what is made almost every thing in the Oxford Tracts. The beginning, the middle, and the end, is apostolical succession. There are several tracts specifically on the subject, and it is dexterously introduced into most of them. It is evidently the sum and substance of their divinity. What an omission it was in the sacred penmen, in not setting this forth as the centre of the system ! How unaccountable it is, that it has been left out in the Creeds ! since it ought surely to have been made one of their primary articles, if it be so important as these Tracts represent it. How erroneous was Archbishop Cranmer, in making little or no account of it ! What a mistake did Hooker commit, in admitting it not to be indispensably necessary ! And what inadvertence it was in Archbishop Wake, to allow the validity of sacraments without it ! New light, as it seems, has shone upon the world, or rather a stream of something like light has broken forth from the thick dark-

ness of Popery, through the means of which it is now made clear, that apostolical succession is every thing in religion, and that without it, there is no certainty of any thing! The truth cannot be preached without it; and without it, there can be no valid sacraments!

And yet after all, the fact is, that Apostolical Succession, as taught in the Tracts, is a very uncertain thing; and the evidence in its favour, during the two first centuries, is extremely scanty, and wholly indecisive. What the primitive writers speak of, is not the succession of *orders*, which is the point so much made of in the Tracts; but the succession of persons, performing the work of bishops or overseers in the Church. The election of the Church, and not ordination, in the modern sense of the word, was what perpetuated the succession. When one died, another was chosen in his place by the Church; and of course, the dead transmitted nothing; and his successor was introduced into his place by election. We do not read, either in the apostolic Fathers, or in any of the writers of the second century, of any ordinations by other bishops, though we read of persons being *appointed* by the apostles. There are two passages in Clement's first epistle on the subject; but there is no mention about orders. Nor is there any thing decisive in any of the apostolic Fathers—nor in Justin, nor in Irenæus; nor, as far as I can find, in Tertullian. Irenæus speaks often of successions; but in no words that convey the idea of orders being conferred. The same thing may be said of Tertullian. He particularly mentions the successions in the Church of Rome; but by no expressions which imply the conferring of orders. It was therefore not without

Clem.
Epist. Sec.
42, 44.

See Lib. iii.
Cap. 3.

See Carm.
contra
Marcion.
Lib. iii.
Cap. 9.

reason, that Archbishop Cranmer expressed that opinion on the subject, given in the seventh page of these letters.

It appears therefore, that the sort of succession maintained in the Tracts, is a matter of great uncertainty ; and yet upon this uncertain thing, is built the whole superstructure of the system ! and by which every thing in religion is made certain ! Sacraments and every thing else ! To make things certain by what is uncertain, is a new discovery, or rather an old one revived, first found out in the dark ages. If persons were to read the writings of the two first centuries, divested of their preconceived opinions, they would find that many of their sentiments have very little, and indeed no foundation in these documents, and much less in the apostolic writings. The patching business of the heretics, is too much followed ; an attempt made to “ adapt apostolic words ” to a system, which ages of degeneracy and corruption have formed. In this art, the writers of the Oxford Tracts are great adepts, having evidently learnt it of the Papists.

As a specimen of the style of preaching adopted by this party, I shall give the following extract from No. 10, entitled, “ Heads of a week-day Lecture : ” —

“ Thus, in one sense, it is from the bishop that *the news of redemption, and the means of grace*, (the italics are in the original) have come to all men ; this again is a witnessing church. I, who speak to you concerning Christ, was ordained to do so by the bishop ; he speaks in me, as Christ wrought in him, and as God sent Christ. Thus the whole plan of salvation hangs together. Christ the true mediator above ; his servant, the bishop, his earthly likeness ; mankind, the subjects of his teaching ;

God the author of salvation." The sentiments and style Pages 4, 5.
 are as completely popish, as any thing that has been ever
 penned. But the evident design of the whole tract is, to
 confine the preaching of salvation to episcopally ordained
 teachers: and what the author seems throughout to inti-
 mate, is, "We shall probably lose our tithes; but we
 must retain our influence, and support our respectability,
 by apostolical succession."

F f. p. 176.

The language of irony may possibly be blamed; and Letter ix.
p. 176.
 the writer may be found fault with, on this score, by these
 authors, as he has already been by a papist, when writing
 somewhat in this strain against him. But fanciful and
 baseless notions can hardly be dealt with in any other
 way. Traditionary and superstitious men, cannot be easily
 made to feel the edge of any other weapon. They are
 like men inclosed in a sack of wool, which no bullet of
 reason can penetrate. It must therefore be either ripped
 up by the keen-edged sword of sarcasm, or pierced
 through by the sharp-pointed spear of ridicule; for in no
 other way can those inclosed in it be effectually remarked.
 These writers have afforded some proof of this. They
 seem to feel the piercings of such weapons, more than any
 thing else, as is evident from a letter by one of the party
 in the third volume of the Tracts. Very great gravity is
 assumed, and "the irreverent treatment of holy things"
 is very seriously reprobated. But these holy things turn
 out to be nothing more than what are deemed and made

so by the party, such as extravagant notions respecting the eucharist and apostolical succession. How many foolish things are reputed holy by Papists and Pagans !

When men make things holy which are not so ; yea, when groundless fancies, and even strange errors are thus made, and this, not by the ignorant, for then there would be some excuse, but by the learned, there is, in my view, no mode of attack that can be too severe. Let them be made the butt of ridicule and irony, as the foolish idolaters were made by Elijah, that they may be ashamed of their doings. If in these Letters or Notes, the writer has in *any* measure treated *divine* things with irreverence or with levity, no reprobation can be too severe for him. But if he has only exposed and denuded the fancies of men, the errors and extravagances of even good men, for the purpose of preventing the spread of false notions, as he believes he has done, no charge of irreverence will ever be felt by him as just, and no grave, long-faced remonstrance from traditionary men, will ever make him repent of what he has done.

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[m] 144



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